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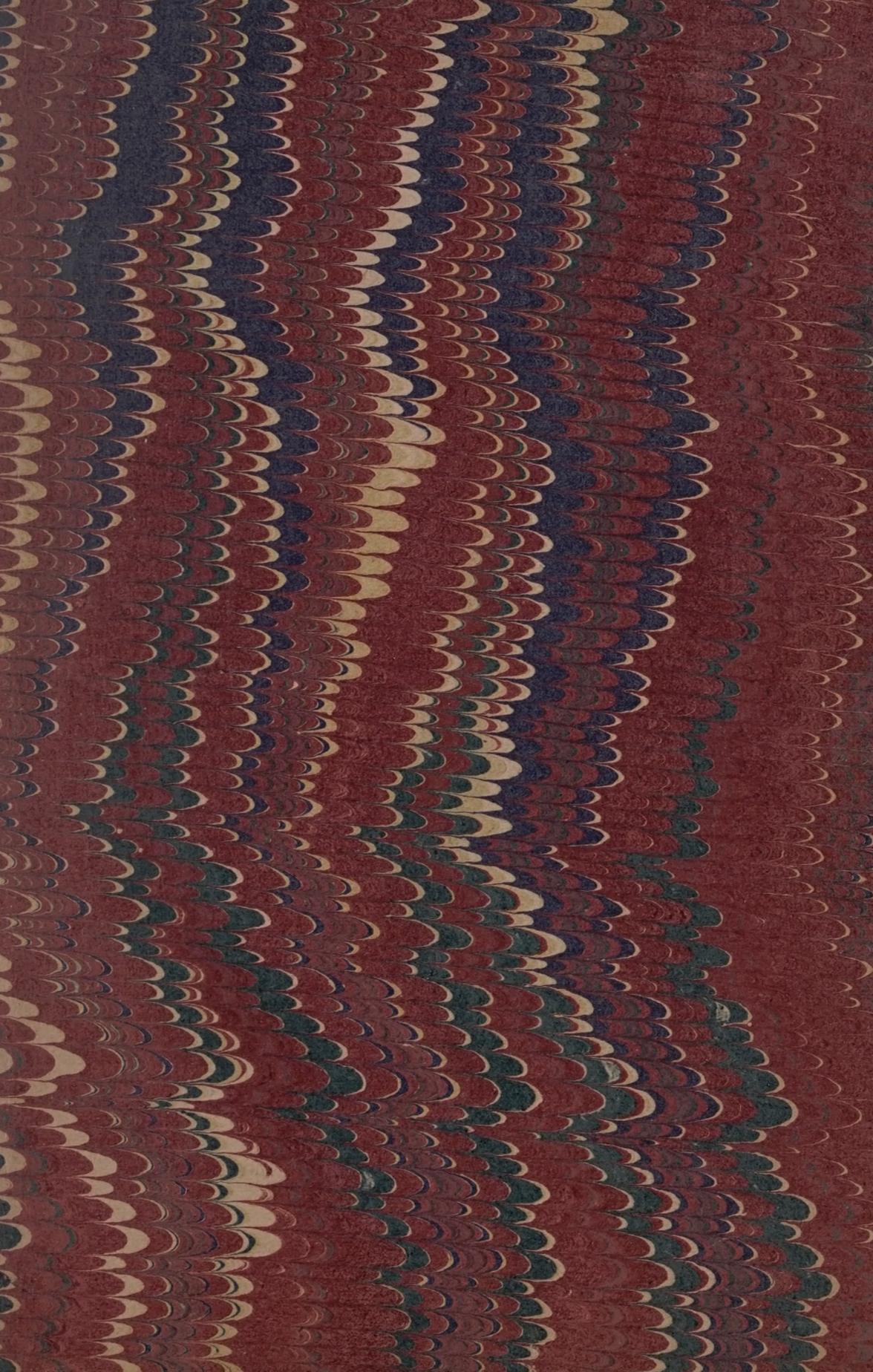
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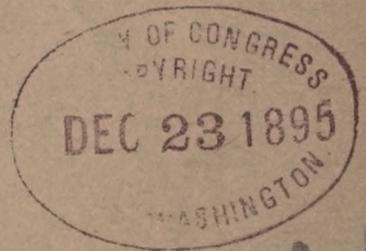
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# Dartmoor

BY MAURICE H. HERVEY

AUTHOR OF "DEAD MAN'S COURT," ETC.

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CONTENTS

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# CONTENTS.

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CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I. AFTER THE BALL.....	I
II. LADY CONYERS HAS HER SAY.....	11
III. GOODWOOD.....	24
IV. RAISING THE WIND.....	32
V. BETRAYED.....	46
VI. MRS. NESBITT AT HOME.....	59
VII. "PROBATION".....	69
VIII. AT NAPLES.....	82
IX. DARRELL V. DYVER.....	93
X. DARTMOOR.....	108
XI. THE ESCAPE.....	127
XII. DENE HOLLOW.....	142
XIII. THE WOLF.....	152
XIV. HUSBAND AND WIFE.....	165
XV. THE MEASURE OF INIQUITY IS FILLED.	177
XVI. THE VENDETTA.....	188
XVII. THE HON. BOB BESTIRS HIMSELF.....	203
XVIII. JUSTICE AT LAST.....	214
XIX. WHAT HAPPENED IN JERMYN STREET..	229



# DARTMOOR.

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## CHAPTER I.

### AFTER THE BALL.

LADY FRAPPINGHAM'S dance was one of the very last functions of note at the end of a brilliant London season, and opinions were unusually unanimous that it had been a marked success. Most certainly Morley Griffin, aged twenty-two, and a lieutenant in Her Majesty's Barsetshire Regiment of Militia, had no doubt whatever on this last point, for had not Ethel Conyers, whilst they sat out a square dance in a quiet nook in the conservatory, promised to be his wife?

Even now, although he had but just received a parting squeeze from her dainty little fingers, ere her mother's carriage bore her away, he could scarcely realize his great happiness. He had fancied, hitherto, that Hugh Darrell was the favored suitor. And yet,

although Darrell had danced with her that night as often as he had and had plainly been making the most of his opportunities, she had accepted him—Morley Griffin! Well, he must pull himself together and face the responsibilities involved in this great good fortune; he must steady himself, and——

“Come along, Morley, to my den,” said a short, sandy-haired, good-humored-looking young fellow at his elbow. “A quiet cigar and a final peg will freshen us up after all this racket.”

The Hon. Robert Dyver (known amongst his intimates as “Plunging Bob”) was the son of the House; and his father, Viscount Frappingham, being a confirmed invalid, did pretty much as he pleased beneath the paternal roof.

“I was thinking of getting back to my rooms,” answered Griffin doubtfully. “These late hours, you know——”

The Hon. Bob interrupted this half-protest by a merry laugh, and looked at his companion in utter amazement.

“What next?” he exclaimed. “Here is poor, delicate Morley Griffin, who stands six feet three in his socks, who measures forty-five inches round the chest, and whom I have seen fined times out of number for overstaying regulation closing-hour at the club, talking about late hours at 3 a. m.! Come along, thou son of Anak, and don’t talk nonsense.”

Some half-dozen other men were easily persuaded to follow suit, and the cosy smoking-room, which the Hon. Bob had described as his "den," was speedily redolent of cigars and whisky.

"Deuce of a bore, these hops," remarked their host, settling himself comfortably in an armchair. "Upset all the servants, and one can't get a decent meal for days afterwards. Thank goodness, this is the last of them; eh, Morley?"

"Well, I don't know," was the reply hesitatingly given. "For my part, I enjoyed this dance immensely."

"So anyone else could see," put in a slight, somewhat blasé-looking man of about thirty, known to the world as Hugh Darrell. "Would it be indiscreet to offer you one's congratulations, old fellow?"

The words were, in themselves, harmless enough, and were uttered in a tone evidently meant to be one of mild banter. But there was a gleam in the speaker's steely grey eyes, and a certain hard ring in his voice, which might have told their own tale to a more observant man than big, good-natured Morley Griffin.

"I don't know what you're driving at," he stammered, with an air of embarrassment, which provoked a general laugh, his infatuation over Miss Conyers having long been an open secret.

“Never mind their chaff, Morley,” advised the Hon. Bob, coming to the rescue. “We shall know all about it when the acceptances for the Matrimonial Stakes come out. By the way, talking of acceptances, does anyone know the strength of the report that Homebush will not start for the Cup?”

“Correct enough I’m afraid,” replied Captain Heavyside, a sporting dragoon. “Broke down at exercise yesterday completely. That should improve the chances of your horse Hyperion, Darrell, eh?”

“Yes,” assented Darrell. “With Homebush out of the way, Hyperion should have the Cup at his mercy. I always fancied my horse’s chance and told you fellows to back him when the weights came out.”

A murmur of assent went round.

“Well,” pursued Hyperion’s owner, “those of you who do so will stand on velvet. He will be at 100 to 12 to-day, and I’ll take short odds he sees 3 to 1 before the flag falls.”

“If you have backed your opinion yourself to any large amount,” remarked the Hon. Bob drily, “you’ll have some nice hedging at that rate.”

“I shall not hedge a shilling,” rejoined Darrell resolutely. “I shall back the horse up to the very start. The race is a moral certainty.”

Now, Hugh Darrell’s judgment was held in

great respect in sporting circles. He had had several stiff bouts with the Ring, and was known to have come off a considerable winner, upon the whole. Indeed, those were not wanting among his enemies who opined that he owed the major part of the large fortune he was accredited with possessing (and, incidentally, his good position sociably) to his cool head and sound judgment in racing matters. He certainly owed nothing to ancestry or family connections, and appeared to take a sort of quiet pleasure in posing as a successful self-made man.

Having exhausted the subject of Hyperion's merits, the Hon. Bob's guests presently departed with the exception of Morley Griffin, who, at his host's particular request, stayed to smoke out his cigar.

"You've become rather thick with that fellow Darrell lately, haven't you, Morley?" he inquired meditatively.

"Not particularly so, I don't think," was the reply. "Now you mention it, though, I do seem to run across him more frequently of late than I used to. Why do you ask?"

"He's a fellow I can't quite make out," explained his host, "and I don't love mystery men. Except that he owns a few good horses, spends money freely, and talks of buying a yacht, one knows so little about him. Who or what is he? Seems a gentleman and moves in

a good set, but somehow nobody seems to know anything of him."

"Oh, he's right enough," rejoined Griffin. "He makes no disguise of the fact that he's a self-made man; but, after all, what does that matter? My grandfather made his money in tallow, or some such stuff."

"What your grandfather did doesn't matter a little bit," retorted the Hon. Bob, sententiously. "You and I were at Harrow and Oxford together. We both got plucked for every possible exam., and all the crammers going couldn't scrape us through the army entrance competition. So you got a militia commission, in hopes of by-and-by creeping back-stairs fashion into the line, and I settled down to nothing in particular. That's all right. We know all about each other, just as we know all about most of the men we associate with. But what the deuce do we know about Mr. Hugh Darrell? By the way, I judged from his remarks that you have cut him out with the Conyers girl."

"Yes," assented Griffin eagerly. "I don't know how he found it out, but, an hour or two ago, she promised to be my wife."

"The deuce she did!" exclaimed his friend, indulging in a soft, prolonged whistle. "That's rather a serious step, isn't it, old fellow? Not coming off just yet, I hope? Fancy marrying, and becoming dead to the world at twenty-

two! It's downright wicked!" and the Hon. Bob paced the room in manifest perturbation of spirit.

Somewhat taken aback by this sudden ebullition of anti-matrimonial feeling, Morley Griffin puffed at his cigar for some moments in silence.

"Hang it all, Bob," he presently protested, "a fellow must marry some time."

"Yes, I suppose so," replied his friend, relapsing into a chair. "So, too, a fellow must give up hunting some time, and, for the matter of that, must die some day or other. But I don't see the force of anticipating the evil hour. However, if you have really proposed and have been accepted, there's an end to the matter. One can't decently pay forfeit in the Matrimonial Stakes. When does the trouble begin? Of course, I'll be there to see you weigh in."

"Bob, you are incorrigible!" exclaimed Griffin. "I believe you regard every event in life from the saddling-paddock point of view."

"Well," was the prompt retort, "and what is life but a succession of races from the Nursery Handicap to the All-aged Stakes? Had Shakespeare lived nowadays, he would certainly have written that 'All the world's a racecourse, and men and women merely—' "gees!" But you have not yet told me when the event is coming off."

"We did not get so far as that," explained

Griffin. "I merely proposed to Ethel, and she accepted me—in a general sort of way."

"Oh!" was his friend's comment. "Then it's not a fixture, after all! Come, that's better. It's wonderful what a lot of these matches never come off. I say, don't glare at me like that, old chap. What is the use of expecting me to look pleased at the prospect of losing a good chum in the matrimonial noose, when I'm not?"

"I told you, Bob, long ago, that my future happiness depends upon making Ethel Conyers my wife," said Griffin, with an aggrieved air, "and that should suffice to enlist your sympathies."

"Oh, I sympathize with you right enough," rejoined the Hon. Bob, "especially as you seem so bent upon sacrificing yourself! But I reserve the right to hope the match may fall through, for all that. What about Lady Conyers? She will have a say in the matter."

"Yes," assented Griffin, "I daresay there will be a difficulty in that quarter. I know Lady Conyers has an idea that Ethel should look far higher than a not over-wealthy lieutenant of Militia. But, after all, the girl is free to choose for herself, and between us we shall have enough to live upon comfortably. By my uncle's Will I shall come into £16,000 upon my twenty-third birthday—six months hence. Ethel will have £10,000 of her own. Say it

costs me £3,000 to square-up my various debts. Very well. I shall throw up the Service, and put the balance of my money into some good paying business in the City——”

“Am I awake?” interrupted the Hon. Bob. “Morley Griffin throwing over the Service to go into business in the City! The man is mad; stark mad! Why, only yesterday we were comparing our books over Goodwood——”

“Oh, I shall give up all that sort of thing,” explained Griffin. “That is, of course, I must see this meeting through, but after that—no more betting for me. I wonder, by the way, whether Darrell’s horse is the certainty he fancies for the Cup?”

The Hon. Bob Dyver laughed. “That’s you all over, Morley,” he remarked. “You talk in the calmest way of giving up racing, and, in the same breath, speculate upon Hyperion’s chances for the cup!”

“I said I should give up racing after Goodwood,” retorted his friend, a little nettled. “I can’t scratch wagers already made, and so I must see this meeting through. I’ve made rather a dangerous-looking book so far, as you know, and if Hyperion is really as good as Darrell says, it would pull me through nicely to back him.”

“If the horse is anything like the owner, I shouldn’t care to back him very far,” was the

rejoinder, as Griffin at length rose to take his leave.

“How prejudiced you are against Darrell!” he remonstrated. “Has he ever done you an injury?”

“No,” replied his host. “I never gave him cause or opportunity. He is one of those men whom I desire neither as friend nor foe, and, if you take my advice, you’ll give him a wider berth in future. Another soda before you start? No? Well, ta-ta, old fellow. I dare say we shall learn something about this wonderful Hyperion this afternoon.”

Whereupon the two friends shook hands and separated.

## CHAPTER II.

## LADY CONYERS HAS HER SAY.

MORLEY GRIFFIN'S forebodings with respect to Lady Conyers' reception of the news of her daughter's sudden engagement were fully realized. A cool, calculating, up-to-date woman of the world, her ladyship refused even to hear of the young militia officer as a prospective son-in-law.

"You must be mad, my dear, to dream of such an alliance," she told her daughter. "This Mr. Griffin is certainly good-looking, and a magnificent specimen of manhood, but I am credibly informed he has next to no money——"

"He will have £16,000 in six months' time," conceded Ethel, a pretty, somewhat empty-headed blonde of nineteen; "he told me so himself."

"He belongs to a fast set, and is doubtless riddled with debts," pursued her ladyship. "The interest upon what may remain to him after paying these debts would probably not keep him in gloves and cigars."

"You forget, mamma, that I have £10,000," urged the young girl, half defiantly.

“Which, safely invested, means an income of £300 a year,” rejoined Lady Conyers. “Sufficient no doubt for pin-money, but utterly inadequate for housekeeping. My dear, the matter is past all argument. You may as well at once dismiss all idea of this preposterous match from your mind. It is a poor return for all my trouble in bringing you up to view the world rationally that, with half-a-dozen excellent *partis* to choose from, you should select this young man, who is quite ineligible.”

“He loves me,” murmured Ethel, at a loss for stronger argument in defence of her lover.

“Loves you!” repeated her ladyship, with fine scorn. “And in proof of his affection, he seeks to fetter you down to the horrors of an improvident marriage! I tell you, child, it is sheer insanity to dream of marrying nowadays upon less than £1,500 a year, and, between you, you would not have half that income. Were he a rising young man in some profitable profession, there might be a ray of hope; but a commission in the militia—really, my dear, the thing is too absurd! You say he intends calling this afternoon. *I shall receive him.*”

Lady Conyers was as good as her word, and poor Morley Griffin spent an extremely *mauvais quart d'heure*. In the coldest language of common-sense she pointed out to him the hopelessness of his suit, from the standpoint of simple arithmetic.

“And having made it plain to you, Mr. Griffin,” she concluded, in her iciest manner, “that you have no prospects whatever of being in a position to keep my daughter in the style to which she has been accustomed, you will, of course, understand that her hasty engagement to you (made subject to my approval) is at an end.”

“But I maintain, Lady Conyers,” persisted Griffin, “that I shall be able, in six months’ time, to provide her with all the comforts and most of the luxuries to which, as you say, she has been accustomed.”

“Excuse me, Mr. Griffin,” rejoined her ladyship. “Your own statement as to your means justifies no such hope. If, six months’ hence, you can show me proofs of an income of £1,400 or £1,500 a year, and if Ethel is still free, I shall be prepared to reconsider my present decision. But, meanwhile, there must be no engagement between you and her.”

“I received her promise from her own lips,” protested the lover, rendered desperate by this ultimatum, “and from her alone am I willing to accept my dismissal.”

“Very well, Mr. Griffin,” assented Lady Conyers, with a steady stare, “you shall have it from her—by post. I have a horror of scenes, and my daughter’s nerves are not sufficiently strong to justify me in subjecting her to the trial of an interview with you in your present

unreasonable frame of mind. Understand, please, that I should regard any attempt on your part to force yourself upon her as an act of gross discourtesy towards me. Good afternoon, Mr. Griffin!"

And before the luckless wooer could frame any adequate protest against this dismissal, a tall flunkey had bowed him out into the street.

"A mercenary old cat!" he muttered to himself, as he walked in dejected mood towards his club. "One would think, to hear her talk, that I'm a downright pauper. After all is said and done, I shall have £16,000 in February . . . less, of course, my debts. . . . Let me see . . . Aaronson, £1,200 . . . Hyman, £800 . . . tradespeople, about £700. Allowing a margin and for extra expenses until February, I shall have a balance of about £13,000 to the good. Hold hard, though! What about my Goodwood book? Homebush has broken down. That's a dead loss of £250. . . . Cambyes scratched for the Stakes. . . . Another facer! . . . Upon the whole, my book doesn't look healthy. What if I went a bit of a plunge on Darrell's horse? Darrell is a good enough fellow, despite Bob's absurd prejudice against him, and he seems very sweet upon Hyperion's chance. Yes, a bit of a plunge would pull me through—if it came off—and leave me something to the good. Hanged if I don't go and talk things over with Darrell. Perhaps he's at

the club. . . . As for Ethel writing to throw me over, that's all rubbish. I know her too well to believe that for one moment."

Mr. Darrell was not at the club, but Morley Griffin eventually found him in his rooms in Jermyn Street.

"Glad to see you, Griffin," was his greeting. "I was just wondering what I should do with myself for an hour or so. Going down to-night or to-morrow?"

"To-night, I think," replied Griffin. "Bob Dyver has wired me that he can put me up at Chichester, and will wait supper for last train."

"Capital fellow, Dyver," remarked Darrell. "Will you split a soda?"

"Thanks," assented his visitor. "It is thirsty weather. And now, Darrell, I want to ask your advice."

"Quite at your service, my dear fellow," answered Darrell. "What is it?"

Morley Griffin made no reply until the servant had supplied the desired refreshment and had withdrawn.

"Well, it's just this," he said; "you fellows chaffed me, after the dance, about Miss Conyers."

"Did we?" queried his host, lighting a cigar and puffing at it with unnecessary vigor. "Not offended, I hope? I fear you were not very discreet. You were overheard, I fancy."

"You seem to have heard of it, anyhow," said

Griffin. "And you were quite correct. Ethel Conyers accepted me."

"Confound this cigar!" ejaculated Darrell, viciously, throwing the weed, which his suddenly clenched teeth had mutilated, into the fire-place. "They always put a percentage of bad ones into a good box. Yes? You were saying that Miss Conyers has accepted you. Let me congratulate you. She is quite the nicest girl I know."

"Isn't she?" echoed Griffin, eagerly, grasping Darrell's hand. "I can scarcely as yet realize my good fortune. But (and here is where I want your advice, Darrell) her mother has seen fit to raise objections to our engagement."

"Ah!" exclaimed Darrell, lighting a fresh cigar. "So Lady Conyers objects, eh?"

"Yes," assented Griffin; "she tries to make out that my means do not justify me in marrying her daughter."

"But, my dear fellow," remarked Darrell, with one of his cynical smiles, "that is easily settled. Refer her to your solicitors and bankers. Nowadays everything is a question of £ s. d."

"That's just where the trouble comes in!" cried Griffin, jumping from his chair and pacing the room excitedly. "I have £640 a year, being the interest on £16,000 due to me next February. After paying my debts, I shall have about £13,000 clear. Now, surely, a fellow with that amount of capital can secure a partnership in some sound business or other——"

“A City-bred man could do so easily,” interrupted Darrell, “but a fellow reared in your school—never. You would simply be robbed. £13,000 to a man like you means, safely invested, about £400 a year.”

“Ethel has £10,000,” put in Griffin.

“Worth another £300 a year,” rejoined his adviser, drily. “That would give you £700 a year between you, of which your proposed wife would contribute nearly half. Imagine for yourself what such an establishment would mean. Lady Conyers is quite right: the thing is an absurdity. Why, I myself, who am by no means an extravagant man, spend, at least, £3,000 a year. And then, I earn money; I grow richer as I grow older.”

“I wish I knew how you do it,” remarked Griffin, enviously.

“Do you?” echoed his host, with his hard, cynical laugh. “Well, I’ll tell you. I keep my eyes and ears open, and a close guard upon my tongue. The world is made up of a good many fools, who commit blunders, and a few wise men, who profit by their mistakes. That is the whole secret, my dear Griffin. For instance, when I gave Chudleigh £800 for Hype-  
rion, he was a fool to sell and I was a wise man to buy—as you will all know when the horse romps in for the Goodwood Cup.”

“You seem very confident about winning that race, Darrell.”

“Certainly I am. I know to a pound what the horse can do. I have studied the form of the other horses in the race, and I am satisfied that, with Homebush scratched, Hyperion must win. Nor can you fellows accuse me of keeping this good thing to myself. As you know, I have made no secret of my horse’s chance.”

“That is so,” assented Griffin, “and some of us have backed your opinion pretty stiffly. I wish I felt as confident about the horse as you do. My book at present is rather in a mess, and I need a good big haul to pull me round.”

“Well, you must please yourself about backing my horse,” rejoined Darrell. “I can only assure you that such a chance of picking up money does not often occur. Except as your friend and well-wisher, it can matter nothing to me whether you take my advice or not.”

“You’re a downright good fellow, Darrell!” exclaimed Griffin, grasping his adviser’s hand. “I’ll risk a plunge!”

“Risk?” echoed Darrell, half contemptuously. “There’s no risk about the matter. I tell you that, so far as Hyperion is concerned, the result of the race is a foregone conclusion. Going? Well, we shall meet to-morrow on the course. *Sans adieu.*”

Lady Conyers was clearly determined not to keep her daughter’s suitor in suspense, for that

very evening a letter reached Griffin from Ethel herself. For some moments the young man stared at the unopened missive, as though half dreading to break the seal. Then he opened it and read the following :—

“171 Curzon Street, August 1st.

“*Dear Mr. Griffin*—Your conversation to-day with mamma will have prepared you for this letter, which, as you can well imagine, it costs me no small effort to write. Mamma has told me all about your interview with her, and I need not, therefore, tell you how determined she is that there shall be no engagement between us. What can I say or do? It seemed so pleasant and so easy to form plans for the future in the conservatory at Lady Frappingham’s, but now it looks as though we were merely building a house of cards. I understand very little about what people call the realities of life; but I know that it costs a great deal of money to keep up an establishment in proper style. Mamma has tried to explain this to me in figures, which confuse me and make my head ache. Yet she has made it perfectly clear that you and I are too poor to marry. Of course I did not know this when I promised to be your wife, and I am sure you did not realize it either when you asked me.

“Perhaps, when you read these lines, you will tear up my poor little letter and call me false and mercenary. I am neither; but I feel I am

not clever enough, nor patient enough, to be a poor man's wife. You would hate me within six months if you saw me in a badly-fitting gown; I know you would. So do not be angry with me, but let us be friends as we were before. One never knows what the future may have in store. It may be that, some day, that which now seems impossible may become possible—who knows? I am nineteen. I shall not be of age for two years, and I must, meanwhile, obey mamma. We are not going down to Goodwood. Mamma has changed her plans, and we are leaving almost immediately for Switzerland, whence we shall proceed, later on, to Italy.

“Lastly, do not misjudge mamma. She is really doing what she considers to be her duty. Personally she likes you. She says you are the finest-looking man she ever saw, and that it is a thousand pities your income does not correspond with your stature! She bids me say that we shall be at home this evening, and that, if you are now prepared to take a reasonable view of the matter, you may call and see me at nine o'clock. We shall be gone before you return from Goodwood, and I should like to say good-bye.

“Sincerely your friend,

“ETHEL MAUD CONYERS.”

Morley Griffin read this letter through twice, slowly and carefully. Then, so far from tear-

ing it up, he placed it tenderly, reverently, in his pocket-book.

“Poor child!” he murmured. “The mother’s influence is too strong for her to fight against. I dare swear Lady Conyers dictated the greater portion and left Ethel to finish it herself. And the sum total of the inspired remarks is this: If, within the next two years, I can succeed in increasing my fortune, and if Ethel remains true to me, then—she may yet be mine; but, meanwhile, there is to be no engagement. Well, from the mother’s point of view, I daresay this is not so unreasonable as I at first deemed it. After all, what need is there of a formal engagement when I know quite well my darling will wait for me? Yes, I’ll be ‘reasonable,’ as her ladyship calls it, and most certainly I’ll call. I wonder if I shall see her alone? Let me see. Twenty to nine. Just time to get there comfortably. I can pick up my portmanteau on the way back, and catch the 10.50 train to Chichester.”

Our hero’s hopes of a *tête-à-tête* interview were doomed to disappointment, for Lady Conyers had been sagacious enough to invite some friends to dinner, and the drawing-room was fairly well filled when he arrived. Lady Conyers, after favoring him with a keen glance of mingled inquiry and warning, received him courteously, with some approach to cordiality even.

“ I am pleased to see that you at length take a sensible view of the situation, Mr. Griffin,” she found opportunity to remark, in a confidential “aside.” “ It is so much pleasanter for all that a proper understanding should be arrived at, especially as we are not likely to meet again for many months.”

And without waiting a reply, she passed on amongst her other guests.

Do what he would, Griffin found it impossible to obtain even a moment’s private speech with Ethel. The girl herself looked somewhat pale and *distracte* and her lover could see that it cost her an effort to treat him as an ordinary acquaintance. But as she gave him no assistance towards securing a *tête-à-tête* (in obedience, doubtless, to her mother’s instructions), he had to content himself with exchanging such remarks as were possible in general conversation. Not until he had bidden his hostess farewell did his chance come. He saw Ethel standing alone near the grand piano, and advanced to take his leave.

“Good-bye, Ethel,” he whispered, hurriedly. “For you are still Ethel to me, and my darling. I understand your letter; and if energy and determination can do it, I will tide over this monetary gap. Only promise that you will not forget me. Give me time, dearest. Wait a little while for me.”

The girl's pale face flushed momentarily, and Griffin felt the small hand tremble in his own.

"Yes, Morley," she murmured, "I will wait—as long as I can."

"Good-bye, then, darling, and God bless you!" he rejoined in hot haste, for Lady Conyers was bearing down upon them. One final hand-clasp, and, a minute later, he was racing as fast as a speedy hansom could travel, to catch the 10.50 train. "She loves me!" he said to himself, "and she will wait for me. The rest depends upon Fortune and myself;" and, so saying, this inconsistent young man proceeded to discount fortune by lighting an eighteen-penny cigar.

## CHAPTER III.

## GOODWOOD.

WHEN, late that night, Morley Griffin strode into the Hon. Bob Dyver's quarters at Chichester, he somewhat staggered that not very prudent young nobleman by the extent to which Hyperion figured in his betting-book.

"One thousand to one hundred and fifty, five time over!" he remarked, raising his eyebrows. "That's going it pretty stiff, isn't it, Morley? The horse appears to be all right, and certainly has a good chance, on paper; but one should know a great deal to plunge like that, if one don't happen to be a millionaire."

"I do know—or, at least, Darrell does," protested Griffin. "You know what a good judge he is in these matters, and he vows Hyperion cannot possibly lose."

"Well, since he appears to take such a great interest in your affairs, I suppose it's all right," was the reply. "Personally, I don't much like the man, as I told you; but he can scarcely have any interest to serve by advising fellows in his own set to back a losing horse."

"Of course not," assented Griffin, eagerly.

“ Besides, he has backed Hyperion heavily himself.”

Much more was said upon the same topic. It is wonderful how talkative men become when a horse is under discussion; and, in the end, the Hon. Bob. so far renounced his prejudice against the owner as to announce his intention of backing Hyperion himself for a win of £3,000.

Goodwood Races, as all the world knows, last four days, the race for the cup being decided upon the third day. The results of the various events upon the Tuesday and Wednesday do not particularly concern this narrative, though it may be mentioned that Morley Griffin had so strong a run of luck that, although he made but moderate wagers, he was nearly £500 to the good upon the morning of Thursday, the Cup Day. Elated by this success, he resolved to increase his venture upon Hyperion; and that animal's price having hardened to three to one, he accepted a final £1,500 to £500. He thus stood, upon the whole, to win £6,500 or to lose £750; and, had he chosen, he might obviously have “hedged” at a considerable profit. Indeed, to this course the Hon. Bob Dyver had strongly urged him.

“ Hedge!” exclaimed Darrell, scornfully, over-hearing this advice. “ It would simply be throwing money away. I have just taken a final £3,000 to £1,000 myself.”

And, fortified by this opinion, Morley Griffin stood to his guns.

Strong and iron-nerved though he was, his heart beat fast as the seven competitors for the Cup paraded before the grand stand. If only that big, grand-looking chestnut, called Hyperion, and carrying the red and gold colors, should justify Darrell's prediction! £6,500. Enough to pay off all his debts, clear his inheritance, and leave him a comfortable sum in hand for an autumn trip withal. The Conyers were going South—to Italy. Let but Hyperion win, and he, Morley Griffin, could compass the same trip, and so remain near his darling. Win? Of course, Hyperion would win! Did he not look a winner all over as he sped past, with long, sweeping strides in the preliminary canter? Had he not hardened down to the position of favorite? And was not his owner, Hugh Darrell, still confidently asserting, with his usual cold, cynical laugh, that the race was as good as over?

Two false starts, both due to the fractious conduct of a vicious-looking bay, called Grasshopper; and, at the second, Hyperion raced with Grasshopper for nearly half-a-mile before his jockey could stop him.

“That won't improve your horse's chance, Darrell,” remarked the Hon. Bob Dyver.

“Oh, it will do him no harm,” replied the owner, coolly. “He likes a pipe-opener.”

“The bookmakers seem to think differently,” retorted the Hon. Bob, grimly, as shouts of “Five to one, Hyperion!” proceeded from the crowded ring.

“They’re off!” proclaimed thousands of voices in a mighty roar, and the clanging bell confirmed the fact that the race for the Cup was indeed in progress. Hyperion again rushed to the front, but his jockey presently steadied him; and, when a mile had been covered, the big chestnut was fourth, two lengths behind three horses that were leading in a bunch, and closely followed by the rest of the field. When another half-mile had been covered, the favorite drew up to the leaders, like an arrow shot from the bow, and loud shouts proclaimed the fact that he was leading.

“As I told you,” remarked Darrell, coolly, shutting up his glasses; “it is all over!”

And Morley Griffin could scarce restrain the cheer that rose in his throat.

Was it all over? What meant that raucous yell from the thunderous-voiced bookmakers? Hyperion was leading, indeed, but his jockey was moving upon him, and, a second later, the tell-tale whip was at work. On, gallant chestnut, on! On, though limb fail thee, and bright eye grow dim, and nauseous taste be on thy bit! On, for yet a few score yards, and hoist thy rascal owners with their own petard! Alas! it might not be! Nor whip, nor spur, nor equine

courage could avail against nauseating drug, and, with drooping head, Hyperion, the favorite, staggered in a bad fifth.

All eyes in his immediate neighborhood were instinctively turned upon Darrell. Not that any foul play was suspected. The jockey had evidently ridden the horse out to the last possible effort; but Hyperion had as clearly been unable to stay the full two miles. And those who had backed the favorite, upon Darrell's advice, now looked at him to see how he would bear his defeat.

Except for a slight paleness, his face showed nothing of what was passing in his mind, and he glanced around him with his habitual cynical smile.

"I think, after that, I shall have a brandy and soda," he remarked, quietly. "That false start pumped my horse."

And so saying, he moved away as cool and impassive as ever.

Morley Griffin had been trained in a school which condemns all outward display of emotion as the worst of bad form; yet it needed a strong effort on his part to maintain the appearance of a tranquil demeanor. To see all his apparently well-grounded hopes of paying off his creditors, and of a tour in Italy, thus suddenly shattered by the collapse of Hyperion, was almost more than he could silently endure.

"Hard lines, old chap," whispered the Hon,

Bob Dyver, squeezing his arm sympathetically, "but it can't be helped. That confounded Darrell must have made an awful mistake about his horse's staying power; the brute was done half a mile from home. I expect that, as he says, that false start took it out of him. Never saw such a complete case of collapse in my life. Come and have a peg to steady your nerves a bit."

Morley Griffin said but little. His disappointment was too keen to permit of his finding solace in words—or, at all events, in such words as might be spoken upon the grand stand at Goodwood. He drank, however, somewhat more heavily than was his wont, and announced his intention of returning to London that same evening.

"Nonsense, Morley!" exclaimed the Hon. Bob. "Stay over to-morrow, and have another slap at the books. A couple of decent wins would put you straight."

"No, Bob," answered Griffin, shaking his head sadly. "If I get any deeper into the mire, I shall never get out again. As it is, it will take me all my time to square up on Monday. I shall get back to-night, and see old Aaronson in the morning."

"Lots of time to see him on Saturday," urged 'The Plunger,' "and to pick yourself up here to-morrow. The last day of a meeting is generally a lucky one for backers. With

a streak of luck, you won't need to see Aaronson at all."

"Don't tempt me, Bob," said Griffin. "I can't venture to risk the loss of any more money just now."

"All right, old fellow, you know best," assented his friend. "Well, since you are bent upon going, you may tell the old shark that, if my luck doesn't change to-morrow, he may expect to see me on Saturday."

And so Morley Griffin was a passenger by the night mail train, by which, somewhat to his surprise, Hugh Darrell was traveling also.

"I am too much disgusted with Hyperion's performance to see the meeting through," he explained. "By the way, I hope you're not very hard hit, Griffin?"

There was a ring of real anxiety about this inquiry for which Morley felt grateful.

"Harder than I can afford just at present," he replied. "I have lost £750; but Aaronson will put that right."

"Only £750!" echoed Darrell, in surprise. "I thought you were in it far deeper than that. Why, £2,000 won't cover my book. You must have done pretty well the first two days."

"Yes," assented Griffin, "I did very well until I went 'nap' on your horse."

Darrell looked at his companion as though suspecting some latent meaning in the words,

but quickly satisfied himself that there was none.

“Come, Griffin,” he said, “you must not talk as though I were to blame for my horse’s collapse. No one could possibly foresee that unlucky false start, but for which Hyperion must have won. I advised you to the best of my knowledge and belief.”

“I’m quite sure of that, Darrell,” was the reply. “You can have no reason to wish me harm.”

Had Griffin seen the bitter smile that curled his companion’s lips, and the savage gleam in the steely-grey eyes, he might have spoken less confidently on this point.

“Of course not!” rejoined Darrell, as they settled down, each into his own corner of the carriage. “Why should I?”

## CHAPTER IV.

## RAISING THE WIND.

MR. JACOB AARONSON was sitting at the receipt of custom in his snug West-end office ; and his vulture-like countenance wore a look of contented expectancy, for he anticipated brisk business that sultry morning in early August. The London season was at its very last gasp, and, as a natural result, many of its votaries were at their last gasp also. Moreover, was it not Friday in Goodwood week, had not the favorites had a wofully bad time of it, and would not aristocratic backers have heavy books to square up upon the following Monday ? Therefore Mr. Jacob Aaronson was sitting, as we have said, contentedly expectant.

Presently his clerk, another vulture of more youthful appearance, entered with a card in his hand. The look of expectancy upon the Jew's face changed to one of eager satisfaction as he read the name.

“ Mr. Morley Griffin ! ” he exclaimed. “ Show him in, Isaac. Show the gentleman in. ”

But the gentleman in question apparently knew the way, for he followed close upon the clerk's heels.

“Morning,” he remarked, with a curt nod, in reply to Mr. Aaronson’s salutation, and taking the chair which the latter indicated. “You can pretty well guess what I’ve come about. Goodwood has cleaned me out, and you must find me £750 by Monday morning.”

Mr. Aaronson rubbed his hands over one another softly, and shook his head with a deprecatory leer that did duty for a smile.

“Money is very tight just now, Mr. Griffin,” he observed, “terribly tight. I was in hopes you had called in order to take up those two bills——”

“Which you renewed last month at sixty per cent., eh?” put in his visitor with a laugh. “Well, if that horse of Darrell’s had won the Cup, I should have been tempted to do something of the sort, but, as it is, I’m just stone broke.”

“That’s bad,” said the Jew, in a tone of regretful sympathy, “very bad. What a pity you young gentlemen will insist upon backing horses! I have already had more applications for money than I can possibly meet. Fact, sir, I assure you.”

“Sorry to hear it, for the borrowers’ sakes,” was the reply. “But you must manage £750 for me somehow or other. As you see, I didn’t stay down at Goodwood for the last day, for fear of making matters worse.”

“Ah!” sighed Mr. Aaronson. “That was

prudent. It is not every backer who knows when he has lost enough. But about this £750, Mr. Griffin. I can't do it, and that's the fact."

"What!" exclaimed Morley Griffin, blankly. "You can't do it? But, confound it all, man, you must do it! I'm £750 short on my book, and the money must be paid on Monday."

"Sorry to hear it, sir," said the Jew, shaking his head slowly, "but it can't be done."

"You did the other bills fast enough," protested Griffin, "and you renewed them, knowing perfectly well that, in six months' time, I shall come into £16,000. You hold my paper now for £1,200."

"Quite so, sir," answered Mr. Aaronson, gravely. "I hold, as you say, your renewed bills for £1,200, but they are very dangerous security. My solicitor has carefully examined your uncle's Will, under which you inherit £16,000 upon attaining your twenty-third birthday——"

"Well?" interrupted the borrower. "Isn't the Will all right, and the money all right?"

"Yes," assented the Jew, hesitatingly, "but the clauses restraining you from anticipating the legacy are more stringent than I thought. The Law Courts have a knack nowadays of enforcing the wishes of a testator, and I am advised that were my claims disputed, I might come off second-best."

"Confound it all, man!" ejaculated Griffin,

hotly. "Do you suppose I would take refuge behind a clause in a Will, to back out of paying you?"

"I do not doubt your good intentions for one moment," was the rejoinder; "nor do I refer to the clause whereby you forfeit everything should you——" and the Jew paused in some confusion.

"Should I disgrace the name I bear," put in the young man, flushing hotly. "Very good of you, I must say, to overlook that contingency."

"But this apart," continued Mr. Aaronson, with an awkward bow, "accidents might happen, and, to put the matter simply, £1,200 is quite as much as I care to risk, Mr. Griffin, upon your own name alone."

"Do you mean to say that you refuse to lend me this £750?" demanded Griffin, starting angrily to his feet.

"'Refuse' is a harsh term, sir," answered the money-lender, soothingly. "Say rather that I cannot see my way to lending it without a second name upon the bill. If one of your friends—Mr. Hugh Darrell, for instance——"

"Confound your impudence!" interrupted Griffin, fiercely. "Do you suppose I'm going to ask Mr. Darrell to back my bill? I'd see you hanged first. If you won't take my paper, I'll try someone else. You're not the only money-lender in London."

And, jamming his hat viciously upon his

head, the youthful plunger strode to the door.

“One moment, Mr. Griffin,” said the Jew calmly. “As you say, I am not the only money-lender in London; but, for your own sake, let me advise you not to hawk your name about. Perhaps you are not aware that there is a system of communication between loan offices, and that if I am referred to I am bound to state what I know of your affairs? Try, if you insist upon so doing. But you may take my word for it that you will merely be put off for the usual ‘inquiries,’ and that these inquiries will block you.”

“Bosh!” was the only comment vouchsafed to this prediction, as Morley Griffin strode off upon his money-hunting mission.

With a grim chuckle Mr. Aaronson went to his telephone, which he kept busy for fully twenty minutes; and, before his late visitor had reached a second office, a warning word was swiftly circulating throughout the money-lending fraternity.

That evening Morley Griffin was forced to confess to himself that he was beaten. Everywhere he had tried, the reply had been the same: “Yes, certainly; nothing could be easier. If he would call again in three days’ time, so as to allow the necessary interval for inquiries, no doubt the loan would be granted.” Three days! And he required the money, absolutely

and at the latest, by noon on Monday. Aaronson was right, after all. What the deuce was to be done? Tormented by this problem, he was making his way moodily enough towards his rooms in Clarges Street when he encountered Hugh Darrell.

"Halloa, Griffin!" exclaimed the latter. "What's up? You look as though matters had taken a wrong turn."

"So they have," assented Griffin, "and a devilish bad one, too. I have been wasting the day amongst the 60 per cent. fraternity. For some reason or other Aaronson has grown shy about discounting my paper, and threatens to block me with the rest of the tribe. I believe he can do it, too; and I can see no way out of the mess, for I must have £750 by Monday."

Hugh Darrell smiled—the habitual cynical smile. "Nonsense, my dear fellow," he said, quietly. "There's a way out of every difficulty, if one can only find it. Did Aaronson suggest no such way?"

"Why, yes," assented Griffin, flushing slightly, "he did. He said that if I got a good name——"

"Mine, for instance?" interrupted Darrell, with a laugh that was half sneer.

"Yes, he mentioned yours. But, of course, I told him that was out of the question."

"Did you?" was Darrell's comment. "Then you should have asked me first. I

would lend you the money myself, but that the season, followed by this confounded Goodwood week, has run me somewhat short, and my yachting cruise will come expensive. But I'll accept your bill right enough."

"You will, Darrell!" exclaimed Griffin, with a sigh of relief. "By Jove! that's deuced good-natured of you, especially considering that——"

"Considering that we were rivals for the hand of the same fair one, eh?" added Darrell. "Not a bit of it. I am always glad to do a friend a good turn; and, so far as Miss Conyers is concerned, I have been for playing the game fairly and squarely, and let the best man win. I know the world is kind enough to say some hard things of me; but then, you see, the devil is not always so black as he is painted."

"'Pon my word, you know," protested Griffin, "I don't know how to thank you, Darrell. I was in a deuce of a tight corner, because it never occurred to me that Aaronson would raise difficulties. You've taken such a load off my mind that I feel myself a new man."

"Psha! my dear fellow, it's a mere trifle," rejoined Darrell, displaying a very perfect set of white teeth. "I'll accept the bill now, if you've got a form ready. No? Well, as I start to-morrow for Paris by the Club train (leaving my commissioner to settle for me on Monday,) have the paper ready at, say, noon.

I'll drop in on you and sign. But I'll ask you not to inflict an interview with Aaronson upon me; and, by the way, oblige me by not speaking of the matter to any of our set. I have refused, over and over again, to back bills for the other fellows, and they might cut up rough if they knew I had broken my rule for you."

"All right," said Griffin, "I shall be ready for you at twelve o'clock; and, once more, ten thousand thanks!"

"*De rien,*" replied Darrell, airily. "I expect to run across the Conyers people at Naples, later on. All sorts of kind messages, I suppose, on your part to the fair Ethel?"

Morley Griffin winced. It was not pleasant for him to know that his wealthy rival would, perhaps, shortly be playing host on board his yacht to Ethel Conyers, whilst he would be economizing down in Somersetshire. However, he remembered certain hopeful words spoken when he had last seen her, and he could scarcely, at that moment, feel irate against the man who was befriending him. And so, after some further banter on either side, Hugh Darrell left him.

"Fool!" muttered the latter, as he strolled towards his club. "Trebly-distilled fool not to divine that I, of all men, would be the last to do him a good turn! Ah! Morley Griffin; in addition to the other wrongs your existence has inflicted upon me, it was an evil day for you

when you took it into your pot-hunting head to come between me and Ethel Conyers !”

In explanation of the epithet “pot-hunting,” it should be stated that Morley Griffin was admittedly one of the best all-round athletes of his day. His 'Varsity record had been one long series of triumphs ; and he had developed such phenomenal muscular power that many good judges would have backed him, with a little special training, against the redoubtable Sampson, then in the zenith of his fame.

Punctually at the hour named, Hugh Darrell called next day upon his youthful rival. The latter was, naturally enough, awaiting him.

“Now, then,” said Darrell briskly, “let’s get through with this business smartly, for I’m in the deuce of a hurry. I have a heap of things to do, and very little time to do them in. Got the bill ? All right. I see you have made it out for £862 10s. The odd hundred, I suppose, is for interest ; and pretty stiff, too. However, that’s your business. Pass me over a pen. I’ll accept right off, and hurry away.”

So great was his evident haste that he did not even trouble to remove his gloves, but rapidly wrote : “Accepted, payable at London and County Bank, Pall Mall branch—HUGH DARRELL,” across the paper, shook hands with Griffin, and made for the door. Upon the threshold he paused for a moment, and added, as an afterthought : “By the way, this is the

6th. Make the date of the bill the 9th, will you? That, with the grace-days, will suit my rent receipts; for, of course, you understand that if it's not convenient to you to meet the bill at maturity, I'll pay it. It would be absurd to renew at 60 per cent., and you can settle up with me afterwards. Good-bye, old fellow!" And he was gone.

Griffin post-dated the bill as directed, feeling pretty sure that Aaronson would raise no objection, and then hastened off to the money-lender's office. In a few words he explained how Darrell had come to the rescue, and his reason for post-dating the three days.

"Ah!" exclaimed the Jew, with a knowing leer, "I knew your friend, Mr. Darrell, would see you through. Never mine the post-dating. Isaac! Make out a cheque in favor of Mr. Morley Griffin for £750. Or stay! I can let you have the money in bank-notes if you prefer it, Mr. Griffin."

"As you please," was the reply. Whereupon Mr. Aaronson paid him the amount in Bank of England notes. As the young giant sallied forth with these in his pocket, he felt almost inclined to believe that there were some good points even about this arch type of the West-end bill-discounter.

Monday was a red-letter settling day for the bookmakers. Darrell's horse, Hyperion, had carried an enormous amount of club money,

and many an aristocratic plunger, besides the Hon. Bob Dyver, had been compelled to resort to the good offices of the tribe to meet his liabilities. Losers are usually disposed to be harsh in their judgments, and some very hard things were said about Hyperion's defeat.

"Devilish rum thing," remarked the Hon. Bob, as he and Griffin sauntered back from Tattersall's with depleted pocket-books. "That Darrell's commissioner seemed to be receiving all the time instead of paying away. It strikes me that, instead of losing, Darrell won heavily over the meeting."

"He told me that £2,000 would not clear him," answered Griffin.

"Then he told you that which is evidently not a fact," retorted his friend. "Anyhow, he showed considerable discretion in clearing out of town so expeditiously, for some deuced unpleasant rumors are current about Hyperion's final preparation for the race."

"Yes," assented Griffin, indignantly, "and without an atom of reason to justify them. The horse was pumped out by that false start, and couldn't quite stay the distance. Darrell explained the whole affair, in a few words, after the race, and you yourself predicted that the long, useless gallop would mar the horse's chance. You remember? I'll tell you what it is, Bob. Some of you fellows entirely misjudge Hugh Darrell. In spite of his cynical

style, there's not a better-natured fellow going when you know him."

"Can't say I yearn to know him any better than I do," rejoined the Hon. Bob. "He's not my sort at all. But there! I know you are infatuated with him, so we'll drop the subject. What say you to a bit of a fly round to-night amongst the shows? We're both leaving town to-morrow for the stubble, so it's our last chance."

"All right," assented Griffin. "Dalrymple is dining with me at eight. Join us, and we can go where you please afterwards."

"Agreed," said his friend. "I particularly want you to have a try at that German strong man's weights—Sampson, he calls himself. Most of us fancy you could make him sit up."

"You fellows make a tall mistake about me," protested Griffin modestly.

"Tall enough, certainly, if it is a mistake," laughed the little patrician, glancing at his companion's towering stature.

"Perhaps with exercise and a couple of months' steady training," explained Griffin, "I could do most of the weight-lifting business; but to tackle a professional at the fag-end of a London season would be sheer folly. I doubt if I could put up a hundred-weight, fairly, at the present moment, in one hand."

"Poor weakling!" chuckled the Hon. Bob. "Well, you must go into training down in the

country, that's all, and show these German chaps that they can't have it all their own way over here. It's a national disgrace to see a pack of foreigners defying all England in muscularity. Go for them, Morley!"

"I might do worse," said Griffin, reciprocating his companion's laugh, "and that seems to be about all I'm fit for. Change my name, shave my moustache, and toss hundred-weights about the variety stage, eh? Well, they say there's a lot of money in it, and, Heaven knows, I want to make some, if I can. Pity it's not a gentleman's game!"

"Gentleman's game be hanged!" retorted the Hon. Bob, scornfully. "It's a vast deal more gentlemanly than quill-driving in a Government office or cadging guineas on a city directorate. I only wish I had your biceps. I'd go into training to-morrow."

"Would you though, really?" asked Griffin, eagerly. "I never know when you're chaffing, and when you're in earnest. Do you think seriously that I could do it without falling socially into the position of an acrobat?"

The Hon. Bob Dyver was recognized as an authority upon social questions, and indulged in a self-conscious little cough before he delivered himself of his opinion.

"Were I you, my dear fellow," he remarked, presently, "and assuming that I made up my mind to tackle the stage, I should view the

matter in a practical spirit, and, so long as I remained upon the stage, I should endeavor to live the life of an ordinary mummer."

"Yes?" inquired Griffin, to whom this statement conveyed no very clear ideas.

"Of course," continued his adviser, "such a life would be, in many respects, different to that which you and I are now leading, but it seems to me that it ought to be a pleasant one enough by way of a change, and, then, when you've made your pile, there's nothing to prevent your falling back into the old grooves, you know. They tell me some of these stars make their £10,000 a year."

Visions of wealth and of Ethel floated through Griffin's brain.

"Well," he said, "the matter is worth thinking over. There can be no harm in training a bit, anyhow."

"That's the idea!" exclaimed the Hon. Bob, who had a sort of craze to see the obnoxious Teutons taken down by an Englishman. "You're not compelled to go in for the show business regularly if you find you don't like it; but do, for Heaven's sake, take the conceit out of these foreigners!"

And thus it came to pass that the young Hercules went in for pretty hard training during the next three months, and developed muscles calculated to make Sampson himself tremble for his supremacy.

## CHAPTER V.

## BETRAYED.

THE time sped by swiftly, as time has a habit of doing when one has a bill to meet ; and, at the end of three months, Morley Griffin awoke to the fact that his economizing had not resulted in enabling him to pay in £862 10s. to Hugh Darrell's account. Under ordinary circumstances, he would have applied to Aaronson for a renewal, since his own legacy would be available in less than three months more ; but, bearing in mind Darrell's parting injunctions not to renew, he allowed the bill to take its course. That course took a somewhat queer turn. He received the following letter from Aaronson :—

“ Charles Street, November 12th, 188—.

“ DEAR SIR,—The bill for £862 10s., drawn by you and purporting to be accepted by Mr. Hugh Darrell, has just been returned by that gentleman's bankers, indorsed : ‘ Signature unlike. Refer to acceptor.’ I hasten to bring this extraordinary circumstance to your notice, and to request your immediate attention thereto.

“ Your obedient servant,

“ JACOB AARONSON.

“ Morley Griffin, Esq.”

Griffin's first impulse upon reading this notice was to laugh.

"This comes of writing with one's gloves on," was his mental comment. "I'll just run up to town and explain. I daresay Darrell's signature was somewhat irregular."

Mr. Aaronson listened with a very grave face whilst Griffin told him how, as he supposed, the alleged dissimilarity in handwriting had been caused.

"If you saw Mr. Darrell sign," he remarked, with a slight but obvious emphasis on the conjunction, "that, of course, must be the explanation."

"*If* I saw him sign!" repeated Griffin, hotly. "What the deuce do you mean? I've told you already that he accepted in my presence. Do you doubt my word?"

"I doubt nothing, sir," was the dry reply. "The bank does all the doubting. However, Mr. Darrell is now in Paris, and I have sent my clerk to him with the bill. So it will be all right."

Griffin left the office, still rather indignant at the Jew's tone, but consoling himself by the reflection that, Darrell being in Paris, a few hours would set matters right.

Next morning, whilst he was at breakfast, a Mr. Garrett was announced, and quietly entered the room.

"Mr. Morley Griffin?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply. "I am Morley Griffin."

"Very sorry, sir, but I have my duty to perform," said the visitor, producing an ominous-looking document. "This is a warrant for your arrest, upon a charge of forgery."

"What!" cried Griffin, starting to his feet. "A warrant for my arrest, upon a charge of forgery! You're mad!"

"Like enough, there's a mistake somewhere, sir," said the detective with a ring of something very like pity in his voice, "but it's not in the warrant. That's all in proper form, as you can see for yourself, and it's my duty to arrest you." Then, seeing the angry gleam in the young man's eyes, he added: "It's useless to attempt resistance, sir; I have help outside. Best, for your own sake, avoid a scene and come quietly."

That there was some horrible, stupid mistake was, of course, quite clear to Morley Griffin. Moreover, he had himself a gentleman's aversion to what the detective called a "scene," and he at once decided to accompany the officer. He had, however, no stomach left for breakfast, for which he substituted a brandy-and-soda, invited his captor to help himself (which he did), and announced himself as ready to start. Hailing a hansom, they drove to Bow Street.

Then, for the first time, Morley Griffin real-

ized that he had been betrayed. The evidence taken was short, but more than enough to justify the remand for which the police applied, and which the magistrate unhesitatingly granted. Hugh Darrell had flatly disowned his alleged acceptance of the bill, the handwriting of which he had declared to be an indifferent imitation of his. He was actually ill in bed, but was expected to be well enough to travel to London in a few days. Hence the remand.

The prisoner, in reply to the usual question and caution, passionately denied the monstrous charge, and was proceeding to give an exact account of what had really occurred, when the magistrate interrupted him by remarking that, as he had decided to grant the remand, the accused had better obtain legal assistance at that stage of the case.

Morley Griffin's eyes flashed ominously and his strong hands gripped the rail of the dock in which he stood. A wild impulse came upon him to wrench the iron rail from its fastenings and, with it as a weapon, to vindicate his right to freedom. But he controlled himself sufficiently to enquire if he was to be detained as a prisoner until Hugh Darrell should arrive to add perjury to his treachery.

"Of course you will be detained in custody," was the reply. "That is what a remand means. And the nature of the case does not admit of bail. Next case!"

The gaoler beckoned Griffin to follow him, but he refused to move.

“Hear me, sir!” he said to the magistrate. “I am accused of a crime of which, as Heaven is my judge, I am as innocent as you are! Why should I be treated like a criminal?”

“If you are innocent, your innocence will, in due course, be made clear,” the magistrate answered. “You are remanded for three days.”

“Come along, sir,” whispered the gaoler not unkindly. “You can’t gain anything by riling his worship, and it is no use attempting resistance.”

For a few moments Griffin felt strongly inclined to test this last assertion, but common-sense again prevailed, and turning upon his heel, he followed his conductor to a cell wherein he was promptly locked up.

Not to dwell needlessly upon this stage of the narrative, suffice it to say that, three days later, Hugh Darrell appeared in the witness-box, and, with seeming reluctance, repeated his Paris depositions upon oath. The court, upon this occasion, was crowded with fashionable on-lookers, including the Hon. Bob Dyver, whom nothing could persuade to believe in his friend’s guilt, and who was eventually turned out for his angry denunciation of the entire proceedings. Many persons remarked that Darrell never once looked at the prisoner, whose

eyes, blazing with passionate scorn, never left his accuser's face. In the end, Griffin was formally committed for trial; nor, despite his solicitor's appeals, would the magistrate consent to accept bail.

At the trial, the evidence for the Crown was over-whelming. Hugh Darrell, still affecting to be an unwilling witness, and playing the part with consummate art, made admissions, rather than statements, fatal to the prisoner. The latter, he acknowledged, had once sounded him as to his willingness to accept a bill; but, although they were on terms of considerable intimacy, he had declined upon principle. Griffin had told him that Aaronson would at once advance money upon his (Darrell's) signature. Upon the date borne by the bill now produced, he was actually in Turin, upon his way to Naples. Cross-examined, he affirmed that he had never in all his life signed a blank bill or cheque.

Jacob Aaronson spoke as to his relations with the prisoner, who, being already considerably in his debt, had endeavored to borrow a further sum of £750, upon his own personal security, in order to pay certain losses incurred over the Goodwood Cup.

This proposal he had declined, but he had suggested Mr. Hugh Darrell's name as being quite good enough, and he had subsequently discounted what he had believed to be that

gentleman's acceptance. Cross-examined, he swore that he would himself be at the loss of the £750 advanced.

Some experts in handwriting were called; but their evidence was conflicting, as it usually is. And, indeed, Hugh Darrell's direct repudiation of the document made their opinions appear as of little or no importance.

Against all this, Griffin's counsel could do little more than point out that the entire case for the prosecution rested upon the bare assertion of Hugh Darrell, and that it was extremely improbable that a gentleman, occupying the social position held by the prisoner, should be guilty of so base a crime as forgery. He called many witnesses of good standing, and notably the Hon. Bob Dyer, to avow their utter disbelief in the possibility of Morley Griffin's guilt; but, as the judge drily remarked, these opinions were not rebutting evidence.

Morley's counsel, doubtless, did his best, but he somehow left an impression that he knew he was fighting a hopeless case, and some persons thought that his manner did not indicate entire belief on his part in his client's innocence. Moreover his experience of courts had taught him the disfavor with which judges view any defence based upon a suggested conspiracy against a prisoner; and even had Morley been free himself to give evidence, he could have offered nothing stronger than his

assertion of his own innocence and of Darrell's treachery. Long before the judge had concluded his summing up, it was clear that a verdict of "Guilty" was a foregone conclusion; and this the jury returned without even leaving the box, the foreman remarking that they were not unanimous in recommending the prisoner to mercy.

The judge, one of the severer sort, apparently did not feel disposed to lean to the side of clemency. He wound up a pithy discourse upon the evils of extravagance, and consequent inability to resist temptation, by passing a sentence of seven years' penal servitude.

All eyes were riveted upon Morley Griffin as the dread words were pronounced. Standing erect in the dock, his eyes riveted upon the half-seated, half-crouching figure of Hugh Darrell, his broad chest heaving and his mouth firmly set, he scarcely seemed to realize at first that the sentence had gone forth which branded him as a felon. Then, with a sudden movement and a short, sharp cry, he hurled himself from the dock upon the barristers' table, at which sat his foe. Darrell heard the cry, and looking up, read his doom in those vengeful eyes. Then, quick as thought and with the instinct of self-preservation, he slid beneath the table. Two policemen, in charge of the dock and momentarily thrown off their guard, at once followed their prisoner and a terrific

struggle ensued. They two were no match for the young giant, who forced his way to the spot where Darrell had been sitting and dived under the table after him. His custodians, however, managed to seize hold of his legs, and, several more constables rushing to their assistance, between them all they succeeded in dragging him back, his right hand securely gripping his enemy by the throat!

The scene which ensued baffles description. Shouts and screams resounded on all sides, whilst the spectators eagerly craned forward their necks to witness the desperate struggle. The judge, speechless with indignant amazement, could only stare helplessly at the surging mass of policemen, barristers, the recently-sentenced prisoner, and the witness whom he was surely strangling. Do what they would, the constables were unable to loosen that deadly grip until they had choked their prisoner himself into a state of insensibility. Then Hugh Darrell was borne away, his tongue protruding, his eyes starting from their sockets, and as nearly dead as ever yet was man who afterwards recovered. The man whom he had betrayed was carried away to his cell in but little better plight, for policemen are not very gentle in their dealings with refractory prisoners.

For many hours he lay unconscious, and his first words, upon returning to life, were, "Did I kill him!" Ah, me! Treachery and injus-

tice had commenced their dire work. In place of gay, good-natured, good-tempered Morley Griffin, a sullen, vindictive, dangerous felon had been added to the world.

Think of him, as he lies in his cell awaiting removal to Pentonville Prison, where, during the first year of his servitude, he will be kept in solitary confinement to brood over the wrecking of his joyous young life. A convict! Convicted of a crime of which he is entirely innocent, and which he yet must expiate by seven years of slavery and unspeakable degradation. Torn from everything that life held for him of precious, from liberty, from love! And by the black-hearted treachery of Hugh Darrell, whose plot, he now clearly sees, had been to separate him for ever from Ethel Conyers.

As the full measure of all that he had lost and of the hellish future in store for him swept like a fiery blast through his brain, Morley Griffin started to his feet, his face full of a sudden resolve. As yet he wore his own clothes. At any moment he might be taken off to Pentonville, where he would have to exchange them for the convict's garb. Surely his best chance of escaping would be between the police-cell and the prison. If he could once gain the street, it would need more than a few constables, on scattered beats, to recapture him. He was strong, aye, strong with a strength which he hardly knew himself; and he was

fleet of foot. A glance at the small window which ventilated the cell, showed him that escape in that direction was impossible. He must wait until his gaolers opened his cell-door. If he could but regain his freedom for even a few hours, he would track down Hugh Darrell and complete the task of killing him. For this was now the one idea which possessed him—to slay his betrayer.

Presently the cell-door opened and a gaoler entered.

“The Black Maria is in the yard,” he remarked, at the same time producing a pair of handcuffs. “After the way you played up in court to-day, the orders are to fit the bracelets on in here. Hold out your hands.”

In an instant it flashed across Griffin’s mind that his attempt, if made at all, must be made at once; since, once handcuffed, he would be helpless. Without the slightest hesitation, therefore, he seized the gaoler in his muscular grasp, hurled him into an opposite corner of the cell, slipped out into the corridor, and shot the bolt which secured the door upon the outside. As he did so a second turnkey rushed up and attempted to pinion his arms. Very deliberately Griffin gripped him with his right hand, re-opened the door with his left, and thrust him in, to keep company with his comrade. He then again bolted the door, and ran up some stone steps which, he supposed, led

to the outer office, and consequently to the street.

A moment later he found himself in a guard-room confronted by four constables, who, hearing the outcries of the imprisoned janitors, at once divined the position of affairs and rushed at him together. Had they used their bâtons, the fugitive's onward career would probably have then and there ended; but, being four to one, they merely endeavored to seize him. Vain effort! The foremost received a sledgehammer blow between the eyes which brought him down with a crash, and then the young giant hurled himself upon the others. As it happened, they were not especially powerful men, and were utterly incapable of withstanding the furious onslaught. A second and then a third fell stunned and bleeding, whilst the other ran through an open door, with the evident intention of summoning a reinforcement. Griffin followed him, and found himself in a yard where a prison-van was awaiting its complement of prisoners.

Beyond the van were two massive closed gates which evidently gave upon the street. He knew that, in a few moments, the courtyard would be filled with police, and he cast his eyes desparingly around for some means of egress. A small wicket in the main gate seemed to offer a last hope. Against this he dashed himself furiously, but it defied all his

efforts. Then he heard the shrill sound of whistles, followed by the rapid beat of feet upon the paved yard, and he knew that his foes, in overpowering numbers, were upon him. Concentrating all his strength into the blows, he smote the topmost panel of the wicket. There was a crash of splintered wood, and he saw the street and freedom before his eyes! Through the aperture thus formed he now made a final, desperate effort to force his way. The jagged timber tore his clothes and lacerated his flesh, but, regardless of the pain, he pressed onwards. Then he felt the rough grasp of many strong hands upon his limbs, and knew that he was caught like a rat in a trap. He was powerless to move backwards or forwards, and in this position his captors held him until they had firmly bound his legs with rope. He was then dragged back into the yard, where, after a short, sharp struggle, he was handcuffed. A few minutes later, he was thrust, still bound hand and foot, into the prison van.

“They’ll settle with you for this up at Pentonville!” remarked a constable, grimly. “They’ve got a way of their own of dealing with warm members like you, and you’re about the hottest I ever came across.”

In due course the van arrived at Pentonville Gaol; and Morley Griffin commenced his convict career with the reputation of being one of the most dangerous and desperate criminals ever received within its walls.

## CHAPTER VI.

## MRS. NESBITT AT HOME.

WE need not be understood to mean "at home" in the fashionable sense, for Mrs. Nesbitt had no fashionable pretensions whatever; nor would Laburnum Cottage, Clapham, where she resided, easily have lent itself to the most modest of social functions. When we say that Mrs. Nesbitt was at home we merely mean that, upon the evening of the day of Morley Griffin's trial, she was seated in her back parlor engaged in making up accounts from two portentous-looking ledgers: a small, spare, grey-haired, keen-eyed woman, plainly dressed in black, and whose age might be anything between fifty and sixty. A woman whom the least careful observer would unhesitatingly set down after a single glance at the aquiline nose and the thin, pursed lips, as possessed of determination and shrewdness in a high degree.

To her neighbors Mrs. Nesbitt had long been somewhat of a mystery. Many years before she had purchased Laburnum Cottage,

where, attended by a single servant older than herself, she had lived a life of almost total seclusion, so far as the neighborhood was concerned, ever since. Visitors, indeed, she had at frequent intervals from London. It was no uncommon thing for fashionably-attired ladies to descend from their coroneted or crested carriages and remain closeted with her for lengthy periods.

Footmen were occasionally observed to follow their mistresses inside, carrying box-shaped parcels, which were not taken away again. Money, too, Mrs. Nesbitt clearly had, for had she not gradually purchased half-a-dozen houses in the neighborhood? But in Clapham she had, in all these years, made no acquaintances, was rarely seen out of doors, paid her accounts weekly through her old servant (who was as unsociable as herself), and, in short, led an existence of mingled respectability and mystery most aggravating to the local gossips.

We have said that, upon the evening of the trial, Mrs. Nesbitt was engaged upon her ledgers; yet, from the frequent pauses that she made and the look of expectancy on her shrewd old face, it was clear her thoughts were not wholly in her work.

“Eight o’clock,” she muttered, presently, “and no news yet, though he knows how anxious I am to learn the result. No thought, no consideration for me—as usual,” she added,

bitterly. "Stay! I can send Judith for an evening paper."

Old Judith departed upon this errand, grumbling at the distance from the nearest agency, and returned with a special edition of the *Standard*, which her mistress proceeded to scan with great eagerness. She quickly found the information she sought, and her eyes gleamed as she read that Morley Griffin had been convicted of forgery and sentenced to seven years' penal servitude.

"Seven years!" she cried aloud, in her satisfaction. "That is good, indeed—more than we hoped for—more than enough for our purpose. Ha! what is this? Terrible scene in court! . . ."

With blanched cheeks she read the highly-seasoned version, given by the reporter, of the prisoner's murderous onslaught upon his prosecutor. "We understand," the report concluded, "that Mr. Hugh Darrell's injuries are such as to cause the gravest anxiety, whilst the prisoner is scarcely in better case."

The newspaper fell from the old woman's hand, and, for a time, she appeared to be half-stunned by the intelligence. Then she rose to her feet and hastened, with unsteady steps, from the room.

"Judith!" she cried. "My shawl and bonnet! Quick! Master Hugh is lying at death's door, and my place is by his side. Quick, woman, I say!"

But, even as Mrs. Nesbitt was hurrying forth in quest of a cab, she ran against a telegraph messenger, who handed her a despatch.

“Newspaper report exaggerated,” it ran. “Unconscious several hours and nerves unstrung. Am now able to journey in brougham. Prepare room. Shall be down by ten to-night. —HUGH.”

Mrs. Nesbitt was not a piously-inclined woman, nor did she rent a pew. Yet an involuntary “Thank God!” rose to her pale lips as she read this message. Whatever the rest of the world might think of Hugh Darrell, he was clearly very dear to this aged recluse.

A little after the hour specified, he arrived. A white muffler was round his throat, he looked very pale, and his limbs trembled under him; but his condition was not such as to inspire alarm. As a matter of fact, the immediate effects of semi-strangulation rapidly wear off once respiration is restored.

“There, Martha, that will do!” he exclaimed, impatiently, after he had submitted to the old woman’s embrace. “There’s no real harm done; though, had that devil held his grip for another half-minute, you’d have had the task of laying me out instead of looking after me for a couple of days. I couldn’t stand the visitors and inquiries at my rooms, and so I have run down to my old nurse until I am fit to wear a collar again.”

“And right glad your old nurse is to have you with her, Master Hugh,” was the reply, uttered in a voice so full of affection and pleasure that old Judith, accustomed only to the sharp tones of reproof or command, stared at her mistress as though wondering where such unwonted sounds had come from. But she soon found other matter to think about, in the preparation of supper, which Darrell’s injured throat made it necessary should be of an especially delicate description.

Over this meal, Mrs. Nesbitt and he discussed recent events in all their bearings, and it at once became evident that a thorough understanding existed between the two. Darrell, whose voice was, naturally, still weak, confined himself to a brief account of the trial and of the struggle in court, and wound up by asking the old nurse for an exact statement of her opinion of matters as they then stood.

“I can’t talk much at present,” he remarked; “but I can listen to what you have to say, and perhaps put you right upon certain points.”

“Very well, Master Hugh,” assented Mrs. Nesbitt. “Then I cannot do better than run briefly over the past. That should help to fix our ideas as to the probabilities of the future.”

Darrell nodded. “Go ahead, nurse,” he said.

“Thirty years ago,” continued Mrs. Nesbitt, “I, a young widow of small means, was employed by the late Colonel Hewitt Griffin (uncle

to this Morley Griffin) to act as nurse to you, then a mere infant, and to bring you up as my own child at Worthing, where I then resided."

"From which I have always concluded," put in Darrell, bitterly, "that Hewitt Griffin was my father and I myself illegitimate. But who the deuce was my mother?"

"The Colonel always observed extreme reticence on that point," was the reply. "Illegitimate you certainly were, since Colonel Griffin was never married, and eventually died, constituting his nephew, Morley Griffin, his principal heir, under certain specified conditions, the most important of which were that he should not succeed to the capital of the inheritance until he attained the age of twenty-three, and that he should, up to that age, have done nothing to disqualify himself from claiming the position of a gentleman."

"Such as committing forgery, for instance," observed Darrell, with a sinister laugh, which was echoed by the old woman.

"Well," she resumed, "you remained with me until you were old enough to go to school—first here, and then in France and Germany—for it must be admitted that your father spared no expense to give you a first-class education. I then accepted the position of house-keeper to Colonel Griffin, who, although he provided for you liberally, for some reason steadily refused ever to see you. This position

I retained until his death. By the same Will which made his nephew his heir, he left me an annuity of £100 'for long and faithful service,' and a sum of £1,000 in trust for you (whom he described as 'my son Hugh') until your twenty-fifth birthday. I had saved some money, and forthwith established myself here, where I embarked upon business as a confidential financial agent, and with considerable success. I invested your thousand pounds in this business, and, as you know, I was able to hand you £3,500 the day you were twenty-five. As you know, too, I have never been backward in helping you further out of my own resources, and, I must say, you have shown yourself capable of taking your own part in the world under the fresh name you selected. Ah! Master Hugh! Those are proud moments for me when I see your name figuring amongst those of high-born guests at some grand entertainment."

"Yes," assented Darrell, complacently, "I have contrived to keep up the appearance of being a wealthy man, and the world has taken me at my own valuation. By the way, that Hyperion *coup* came just in the nick of time; the expenses of the season had run me down rather low just then. And what a magnificent *coup* it was! I put the horse about at the clubs as a moral certainty for the Cup, got my commissioner to lay against him all he could,

painted Hyperion's bit with *nux vomica*, and hey presto! the trick was done! And what trouble I had to persuade Aaronson to advance me £800 to buy the horse! Why, I cleared £8,000 over that Goodwood Cup, and some of the silly gulls (including our convict Morley Griffin himself) sympathized with me over my supposed losses! Was it not splendid?"

"Yes, Master Hugh," chuckled the nurse, "you managed it well. But," she added, more seriously, "was it wise to waste so much money hiring that yacht at Naples?"

"Certainly it was, Martha," answered Darrell. "I had an object in view—to smooth the way for my intended marriage with Ethel Conyers, by figuring as a rich man in the eyes of her mother. Now that Morley Griffin is removed from my path, I have only to choose a judicious moment to propose, to be accepted. I think I played those cards well. And now, nurse, tell me, how do you think we stand as regards the Will? Aaronson seems doubtful whether the Courts will uphold the forfeiture clause."

"Then Aaronson is a bigger fool than I thought him!" answered Mrs. Nesbitt, angrily. "What! Colonel Griffin expressly provides that in the event of Morley Griffin dying without issue before attaining the age of twenty-three, or in the case of his committing any act unfitting him for the society of gentlemen, the

whole of the money shall go to me with reversion to you (whom he again describes as ' Hugh, son of my said housekeeper, Martha Nesbitt '). Morley Griffin becomes a convicted forger. How can the Courts override so plain a forfeiture of his claim? As well say at once that it is useless making a Will at all!"

"It sounds reasonable, certainly, as you put it," assented Darrell. "I suppose," he added drily, "when you come into all this money, Martha, you'll let me have some of it to go on with?"

"For any reasonable purpose, yes, Master Hugh," answered the old nurse, a little stiffly, for money was very dear to her heart. "In any case, you'll come into everything at my death."

"Pshaw, nurse!" exclaimed Darrell, casting a keen glance at the old woman's wiry figure. "You're good for another twenty years at least; you'll bury me, most likely."

Something in the speaker's tone grated upon the nurse's ear, despite the almost jocular sense of the words. Could it be that this man, whom she had reared and watched over, and loved from infancy, secretly cared more for her possessions than for herself?

"I trust not, Master Hugh," she said, with a quivering of the thin lips. "My dearest hope is that, when my time comes, you may be there to close my eyes."

“The sooner the better,” muttered Darrell, as the old woman hastily withdrew upon a pretext of assisting Judith in preparing his bedroom. “But my experience is that these lean old females are immortal. . . . I wonder how Morley Griffin feels now? Ha! ha! It was a bold game and well played! That post-dating the bill floored him utterly, especially as old Aaronson gave him notes instead of a cheque. ‘Cute old fox, that. Let me see. Seven years. That means about six years, I believe, if he behaves well and becomes entitled to a ticket-of-leave. Ah, well! He must not be allowed to play the part of the model convict, and he certainly did not establish a reputation for docility to-day. I hear he half-killed four policemen this evening before they got him into the van, to say nothing of the fight in court. No doubt he could be stirred up into insubordination, later on, resulting in additions to his sentence. I have even heard of deaths occurring unexpectedly at Portland and Dartmoor. I have plenty of time, anyhow, to inquire into these prison secrets; but I must not forget that, if ever Morley Griffin regained his freedom, it would go hard with me. Ugh! What Titanic strength the fellow has! I fancy I can feel his grip upon my throat, curse him!”

## CHAPTER VII.

### “ PROBATION.”

ALTHOUGH this story is called “ Dartmoor,” and is, in a sense, a convict story, it is not proposed to dwell, at any length, upon the everyday incidents of convict life. Those interested in such details will find them abundantly in Charles Reade’s novel, *It’s Never Too Late to Mend*, and in other works written by men who have actually served sentences. A short chapter will, therefore, suffice to describe Morley Griffin’s experiences during what is officially termed the “ probationary ” period of his incarceration.

Having exchanged his own clothes for those provided by the prison regulations, the newly-made convict was marched up several flights of stairs and locked up in the cell which was destined to be his abode during the ensuing nine months. The furniture of this small apartment was scanty and of the simplest. A stretcher to sleep upon, a stool, a small table, a metal water-jug, a slate, pencil, and Bible ; these were the fittings. Some bread, and a weak, tasteless mess of gruel were brought to

him for supper ; and he was left to his own meditations until 6 A. M. next morning.

Then there followed a routine of cleaning out his cell, of oakum-picking by way of work (fancy putting a man who could up-end several hundred-weights to pick oakum !); of more gruel by way of breakfast ; of a solitary promenade up and down a corridor for an hour by way of exercise ; of bread, meat, and the water it had been boiled in, by way of dinner ; of more oakum-picking, more gruel, and finally twelve hours' sleep or meditation to wind up with. From morn till night not a soul did he see except the warder who brought him his food and his oakum, and even with him he was forbidden to speak.

For a couple of days he was too crushed by mental anguish to pay much heed to aught else. He did what he was told to do quietly and mechanically, picked his oakum as well as he could, ate his allowance of food, and slept when the recollection of his wrongs would allow him to do so.

Upon the third day he was brought before the governor of the prison, who briefly told him that any infraction of the rules placarded in his cell would be followed by condign punishment : that he had arrived with an evil reputation for violence and insubordination, and that he would best consult his own interests by a tranquil and respectful behavior. After

which exhortation he was marched back to his cell.

But, a few hours later, he was visited by the chaplain, and with him he was permitted to converse. The reverend gentleman listened to what he had to say, but made it abundantly clear that he did not believe his story. Upon his side, he favored him with some stereotyped remarks upon the wickedness of sin, and the penalties of unrighteousness. Both these interviews were clearly calculated to produce a deep impression, and were in strict conformity with the regulations sanctioned by the Directors of Her Majesty’s prisons. But, that same evening, he had a third interview (which the said regulations would by no means have sanctioned), with the warder who had special charge of the story upon which his cell was situated.

“ I’ve seen a friend of yours outside,” remarked this official, by way of preface, “ and from what he tells me, I feel disposed to take an interest in making things a bit comfortable for you.”

“ A friend of mine ? ” repeated Morley, eagerly. “ Who is it ? Mr. Dyver ? ”

“ Yes, sir,” replied the warder, “ that’s his name right enough—the Honorable Robert Dyver. And a very pleasant, free-handed gentleman he is, too. He gave me a letter for you——”

“Dear old Bob!” interrupted Morley.  
“Where is it?”

“Here it is, sir,” was the reply. “If you’ll come along to the store-room, you can have a bit of something to eat whilst you’re reading it.”

The store-room referred to was at the end of the landing, and thither the friendly warder, Ricketts by name, conducted the prisoner. Upon a table stood a solid, appetizing supper, flanked by a large bottle of stout.

“There you are, sir,” remarked Mr. Ricketts. “That’s the best I can do for you this evening. There ain’t much chance of the chief coming round, but I’ll go and keep watch whilst you have a feed. If you hear me cough twice, scoot back to your cell as quick as you can. I can’t give you more than twenty minutes anyhow.”

Morley’s first care was to read the letter, which ran thus :—

“DEAR M.,—Keep your heart up, old chap, and rest assured that no efforts will be spared to unmask the scoundrelly plot, of which you have been the victim. I insulted H. D. publicly in the club this morning, and, had he not looked so pulled down after the choking you gave him in court, I would have thrashed him. Trust me, no one shall take his view of the case

whilst I am about. I am sure everything will come out right soon.

“Meanwhile, I have been studying the economy of Her Majesty’s gaols, and, as I got my information from the lips of a ticket-of-leave man, whom I managed to ferret out in Convent Garden, I can rely upon it. You are now being subjected to the ‘silent system’ in Pentonville, as a sort of special training for Portland or Dartmoor, and I know from my informant exactly what you have to undergo. But it seems that your position can be vastly improved by bribing the warder who has especial charge of you, and I have managed, after some little trouble, to discover and arrange matters with this individual. You must simply consider yourself as being on board ship for the time being and this fellow as a steward. He undertakes (for a consideration satisfactory to us both) to supply you with anything and everything you need in the way of food, liquor, and such other luxuries as it may be possible for him to smuggle in. Of course, he will post letters for you, and receive replies at his own address. Let me know that you get this safely, and that R. acts up to the mark.

“Yours as ever, D.”

This was indeed a cheering letter, and Morley read it through twice before he burnt it (for fear of accidents) in the flame of the candle.

Then he made an excellent meal, and was just finishing the stout when Ricketts returned to warn him that the time was up.

After this, except for the galling restraint of prison life, Morley had little to complain of; and the frequent, hopeful letters of his staunch friend, Bob Dyver, by begetting confidence in his speedy release, made even confinement not wholly unendurable. He had his *Standard* with his breakfast, and his *Pall Mall Gazette* every evening; he ordered what he pleased (within reasonable limits) to eat, and, had he chosen, he might have indulged freely in whisky. But, in point of fact, his period of training had broken him off stimulants and tobacco, and he was far too sensible to revive such dangerous habits.

But, as the time sped on, the dreary monotony of his life grew more and more irksome. Bob Dyver's letters, it is true, continued to breathe a hopeful strain; but hope too long deferred, as we all know, maketh the heart sick, and at times poor Morley's was very sick indeed within him. Neither of Hugh Darrell nor of Ethel Conyers had his friend been able to obtain any news. Both appeared temporarily to have disappeared from the ken of society.

The friendly terms upon which he stood with Warder Ricketts naturally precluded him from forming any plan of escape from Pentonville, but he sometimes discussed the possibilities of

getting away should he be sent on to Dartmoor.

“Well, sir, it’s just this way,” the warder would remark. “If your friend don’t get your sentence reversed afore you leave here, it ’pears to me you’ll have to serve it right through. And, of course, down at Dartmoor or Portland you won’t be comfortable like you are here. They’re regular hells on earth to live in, sir, and no mistake; and even a friendly warder can’t do much for a prisoner down there. So if you can fix up any plan to escape after you leave Pentonville, do it—and good luck attend you, sir.”

The governor, chief warder, chaplain, and other superior officials of the prison were at first considerably surprised at the orderly conduct of the prisoner, who had come to them with such a terrible reputation for ferocity and recklessness; but as the time wore on, and Ricketts’ reports were invariably favorable, they gradually settled down to the comfortable belief that Morley Griffin was a notable and satisfactory instance of the beneficent results produced by the silent system—a system invented by, and championed by, all those responsible for the conduct and safe-keeping of criminals. No doubt these high authorities are right; they certainly have ample experience to guide them in forming a correct opinion. But it is not quite clear to the inexperienced mind, why, after

seeking to reform the evil-doer, by isolating him during nine months from other evil-doers, he should afterwards be sent to serve out the rest of his sentence amongst gangs of the very worst criminals the country produces. One could more easily understand the reforming process taking place during the last nine months of a sentence, if, indeed, it be expedient to herd criminals together at all. The cynic will, of course, declare that no such thing as reformation is intended at all; that to diminish crime would simply deprive many of the gaolers and chaplains of billets which they now enjoy; and that the silent system precedes the University curriculum in crime at Portland or Dartmoor simply in order to break the convict's spirit, and make him hail even chain-gang work as a relief from the deadly monotony of Pentonville. But, then, of course, cynics always say unpleasant things.

It must not be supposed that Morley enjoyed a monopoly of Warder Ricketts' good offices. Oh, dear, no! That astute official had half-a-dozen other paying clients amongst the forty prisoners entrusted to his charge; and his profits between January and December probably exceeded the annual stipend of the governor himself. This latter functionary made an official round of inspection once a week, and Mr. Ricketts always knew beforehand exactly when to expect him. Upon these occasions

the discipline observed was more than Spartan in its severity. A couple of prisoners, armed with brooms, were stationed far apart from each other, and, at the right moment, were discovered sweeping a spoonful of dust carefully saved for the purpose.

“ ’Tshun!” Mr. Ricketts would bawl, with every appearance of being taken wholly by surprise by the great man’s visit. “ ’Ands to your sides! Heyes to your front!”

Then cell after cell would be opened, and each occupant found to be industriously performing his allotted task. But, half-an-hour later, the paying clients would be chatting or playing poker in the store-room, scouts being always posted to guard against all possibilities of a surprise visit. A strangely-assorted lot they were, too, these paying clients. There was a parson, who had eked out an inadequate stipend by forging scrip of a company of which he had been a director. A bank-accountant, who had provided for an advanced young woman at St. John’s Wood, at the expense of his employers. A jeweler, who had substituted paste for diamonds in a tiara intrusted to him to repair. A meek individual, who had narrowly escaped the gallows for having assisted Nature to make him a widower. The most remarkable thing was, that all these persons were innocent of the crimes laid to their doors. They said so themselves, and, of

course, they must have known. The only one who admitted the justice of his conviction was a broken-down Army man, much addicted to strong waters and still stronger language.

“Seven years!” he used to exclaim, with a chuckle. “I deserved seventy! And when I think of the nice little nest-egg waiting for me when I get out, I consider the provision dirt cheap at the price. Dirt cheap, sir—damme!”

For a long time Morley Griffin shunned the society of these Pentonville aristocrats. But, by degrees, weariness of his own company drove him into theirs. He had no doubt that they were one and all real criminals, but were they not equally justified in regarding him as one? And would not the law presently force him into the companionship of monsters beside whom these men were relatively snow-white?

Thus the time passed wearily, monotonously, during the allotted probationary period; and one day Morley Griffin learned from Mr. Ricketts that orders had arrived for his transference to Dartmoor.

“I’m right down sorry to lose you, sir,” remarked this corrupt but good-natured officer. This was, doubtless, very true. The Hon. Bob Dyver was an exceptionally liberal and unquestioning paymaster. “But you’ve got to go, and that to-morrow. So if you have any letter to send, let me have it this evening.”

Morley did write and, of course, to his friend.

“ DEAR BOB,” the letter ran, “ I have just learned that I am to be sent to Dartmoor to-morrow. This means of course, old fellow, that all your well-meant efforts to secure my release have failed ; and, indeed, judging from the scoundrels I see here, who all protest their innocence, I can quite understand that, once a man has been sentenced, his guilt is taken for granted. Now, it seems that, if I serve my sentence quietly I may expect to be released upon a ticket-of-leave in five years’ time. Five years ! Think of it, Bob ! Five years of a life compared to which R. assures me this is a perfect paradise ! I have made up my mind, old chap. I shall make my escape the first moment I see a chance. This may offer itself on the way down to Dartmoor, or I may have to wait for a better opportunity down there. But escape I must and I shall ! And when I do, let H. D. look well to himself, for the next time his eyes meet mine his end will be very near ! Good-bye, dear old fellow. Something tells me we shall meet again long before five years. By the way, I enclose an order upon my lawyers in your favor for £300. They have plenty of money of mine, and I can’t allow you to be out of pocket by your kindness to me here. Give my regards to such of our lot as still believe in—

“ Yours as ever,

“ M. G.”

Morley Griffin's hopes of escape during the journey were doomed to disappointment. Mindful of his gigantic strength and desperate courage, the authorities took the special precaution of leg-ironing as well as hand-cuffing him ; and, with a stalwart constable on either side of him, he was absolutely helpless. The train started very early in the morning ; but, early as it was, Bob Dyver was at the station to see him off.

"Now then, sir, stand back !" cried one of the warders.

"Stand back, be d——d !" retorted the warmhearted young patrician. "Would you stand back if the best friend you had in the world was being dragged away in chains for a crime he never committed ?"

And fairly breaking down, Bob Dyver's tears fell upon the manacled hands which he clasped in his own.

After all, even warders and policemen are human, and no very forcible attempt was made to interrupt the leave-taking, until Griffin was ordered to enter a compartment, into which his escort immediately followed him.

The prisoner's heart was too full for many words ; but the presence of the one man, of all his so-called friends, who had stood, and still stood, so staunchly by him, acted upon him like strong wine.

"Good-bye, Bob !" he cried, when at length

the train started ; “ we shall meet again, never fear ! ”

“ Good-bye, dear old chap ! ” was the reply, as Bob Dyver’s hand momentarily sought that of one of the constables. “ I shall give the Home Secretary no rest until he sends down your release ! ”

Morley Griffin smiled grimly, and the last look which his friend caught of his face caused him to mutter to himself, as he sadly sought his hansom :

“ Poor old Morley ! He means to escape, that’s plain ; but, judging from the way he is guarded, he’ll never get even the ghost of a chance. Fancy two powerful constables to escort a single prisoner ironed hand and foot ! It’s downright mean ! . . . No good ! ” he added to the driver of his cab. “ The mare won’t be called upon to travel, after all. ”

Now, it was somewhat remarkable that the mare in question should have been the Hon. Bob’s own celebrated trotter, “ Madeline,” and the driver his own groom, Walters. Apparently, had an escape been possible at the station, means of rapid flight had been provided.

“ More’s the pity, sir,” replied the pseudo-cabby. “ She was never fitter in her life ! ”

Ah ! Bob Dyver, with all your wildness, your heart was good ! It is not everyone who would risk a felony to assist a friend,

## CHAPTER VIII.

## AT NAPLES.

WITH his victim safely under lock and key at Pentonville, as a preliminary to the yet more degrading fate in store for him at Portland or Dartmoor, Hugh Darrell assured himself that his schemes bade fair to succeed in every particular. It is true that, thanks mainly to the Hon. Bob. Dyvers's action and influence, he found himself practically ostracized from the set which he had heretofore been justified in regarding as his own. Men with whom he had hitherto been on terms of intimacy now returned his salutations with the coldest of nods or cut him altogether.

If he attempted to join in a conversation in a club smoking-room, a dead silence ensued until he had withdrawn. If he volunteered to cut in at a rubber of whist, the party at once broke up. He found the doors of most of the best houses, to which he had formerly had access, now closed to him. In short, he soon discovered that the example set by Dyver and copied by that young nobleman's numerous friends was being followed by all the best people.

And, in the end, matters were made so uncomfortable for him, that he decided to live abroad until the Morley Griffin scandal should have blown over.

Yet, although this enforced temporary exile galled him to the quick, it was not without its compensating advantages. Lady Conyers had become bitten with a mania for foreign travel, and, except for a brief stay in London during the ensuing season, resided abroad with her daughter. Her movements were easily traced, and, by the exercise of a little tact, Darrell was enabled to see a good deal of the girl whom he had sworn to make his wife. The verdicts of society are far-reaching, and, at first, his advances were coldly received by both mother and daughter. But Lady Conyers, already prejudiced against Griffin as a troublesome ineligible, gradually came round to view the matter from Darrell's point of view, the more especially as he had more than once made himself extremely useful to her *en voyage*.

"You see, Lady Conyers," he would remark, with a well-affected air of injured innocence, "it is very hard lines on me that I should be blamed because Griffin came to grief. What could I do? The man deliberately forged my signature and raised money on the bill to pay his gambling debts. How could I commit perjury and compound a felony by swearing the signature was genuine? Yet that is what

Dyver and his partisans seem to think I should have done."

And, by constant repetition of this species of special pleading, Darrell successfully posed in her ladyship's eyes as a much-maligned martyr to duty.

Moreover, the man was obviously wealthy and, equally obviously, deeply in love with Ethel, who, after a first natural outbreak of grief at her former lover's fate, had apparently become resigned to his loss. The girl had doubtless been really fond of her stalwart wooer, and, given any reasonable prospect of marriage with him, might have mustered sufficient resolution to wait until his fortunes should improve. But Morley was in prison—a convict, sentenced to a long term of penal servitude for a terrible crime. It was true he had sent her an impassioned letter from Pentonville, protesting his innocence, accusing Hugh Darrell of treachery, and imploring her to disregard the verdict of the jury. But Ethel Conyers was not made of heroic clay. She had not sufficient faith in her lover to believe him against the world, nor to wait seven years in order that he might essay to prove his innocence. Some tears she shed, but she did not answer the letter.

Given a gook-looking, wealthy, devoted admirer as clever and plausible as was Hugh Darrell; given, too, a strong-willed mother who

encourages this admirer's suit ; and given a not over-lively suburb of Naples as the scene of the final wooing ; given, we say, all these surroundings, and what wonder if, little more than a year after Griffin's trial, Ethel Conyers became Hugh Darrell's wife ?

For perhaps the first time in her worldly-wise life, Lady Conyers had allowed her wonted vigilance in business matters to lie dormant. That Hugh Darrell was a wealthy man she had not the smallest doubt ; and when the question of settlements upon Ethel came up for discussion, she was as wax in the hands of her astute son-in-law elect. He produced a bewildering mass of documents (those that were not forgeries being title-deeds of Mrs. Nesbitt's various possessions, borrowed for the occasion), which made it clear that he was worth at least £4,000 a year.

"As regards Ethel's £10,000," he remarked, loftily, "that I propose to settle entirely on herself. The interest should suffice for pin-money, Lady Conyers?"

"Certainly," was the reply, "it is a very liberal allowance."

"For the rest," continued Darrell, "I am, as you have perhaps divined, what is termed a good business man. I believe in making money as well as in spending it. As you see, my income is already a decent one, but I see my way to making it increase year by year. To do this

I require the use of all the capital at my command, and instead of withdrawing a supplementary £10,000 to settle upon Ethel, in addition to her own, I have insured my life in her favor to that amount. It comes to exactly the same thing, and it pays me better. See! Here are the receipts for premium. Do you follow me, Lady Conyers?"

"Yes," assented her ladyship, a little doubtfully. "Should you die, this £10,000 will be paid to Ethel?"

"Quite so," said Darrell. "Here is the deed to that effect. Moreover, here is my Will, entirely in her favor, whereby I leave her all that I may die possessed of, with reversion, of course, to our children, should there be any. In short, Ethel will share what I hope will be a large and increasing income whilst I live, and, at my death, she will have £20,000 at her absolute disposal, together with a life interest in my entire estate. Does this meet your views? Take time to consider. Of course, your own lawyers will see that the terms I offer are properly carried out."

This last sentence settled whatever lingering doubts remained in Lady Conyers's mind—as Darrell intended it should. If these proposals were sufficiently genuine to pass muster with Screwitt and Sharpe, of Lincoln's Inn Fields, they were liberal in the extreme. Ethel's own £10,000 was certainly secure. So, too, was

the insurance money. Darrell was undoubtedly a clever man, a man of the world, quite capable of making a hugh income out of his capital, as he said. That would be pleasant, very pleasant. There are great advantages in having a rich son-in-law to keep up establishments and defray the cost of yachts. Ethel would be off her hands, and she foresaw a share for herself in the young wife's coming prosperity. Lastly, at the worst, and supposing Darrell came to grief, there was no getting away from the £20,000 settled upon her. Lady Conyers made up her mind, but, woman-like, she did not at once say so.

"I shall think over what you have said, Mr. Darrell," she remarked. "If you will dine with us this evening, I will let you know my decision."

Hugh Darrell bowed and turned his head to conceal the cynical smile of triumph that forced his lips apart.

"I leave my fate entirely in your ladyship's hands," he made answer, "feeling well-assured that you will do me justice. I shall be here at seven o'clock."

And, it being still early in the afternoon, Hugh Darrell drove off to make love to a pretty *contadina*, who had struck his vicious fancy.

"I see exactly what's coming," he soliloquized, as the clumsy conveyance, with loud cracking of whip, jolted along at a five-mile-an-

hour pace. "Subject to Screwitt and Sharpe's approval of my papers, Ethel is mine. Mine! Do you hear, Morley Griffin? Not yours, you overgrown ass! But mine—the property, body and soul, of me, Hugh Darrell, your bastard cousin, whom my father sought to rob to make you his heir! Curse him and curse you! . . . I am driving along a picturesque road, in balmy air, to meet a charming little Italian girl, and to-night the date of my marriage with your lady-love will be fixed. What are you doing? . . . Let me see. . . . They have shifted you to Dartmoor, haven't they? Unpleasant place, I should say, in the month of January. I dare say at the present moment you are chopping wood, or, as you're a giant, quarrying rock, with an east wind whistling through your convict uniform! Ha! ha! ha! . . . Fools talk about the All-wise Providence, which never allows the innocent to suffer in the long run, and which metes out justice even in this world! What do *you* think? You were innocent enough—I never came across such a simpleton. Yet you have suffered, haven't you? Aye, and as to the 'long run,' I'll look after that. I take a great interest in you still, Morley Griffin, and I intend to visit Dartmoor pretty soon—shortly after our honeymoon, my convict friend. I don't think I shall take Ethel down to see you, though I should like to. I doubt if I shall even risk seeing you myself. You have the strength

of ten devils in you, you know, and I shouldn't care to rely on a few warders as a safeguard if we met face to face. But I shall visit Princetown, never fear. I have discovered a warder who, I think, may be brought to terms, and then, Morley Griffin, you will need to be very guarded indeed in your conduct. I have made quite a study of the dark ways of penal servitude. I wonder what you would do if they flogged you? Kill two or three of them? Best thing you could do—'best for you and best for me!'" And, in the ferocious exuberance of his triumph, Hugh Darrell fell to singing the beautiful ballad, "In the gloaming," with such impromptu words as his fiendish humor could suggest.

Two hours later the pretty *contadina*, as charming a sixteen-year-old Neapolitan peasant-girl as you shall find, returned, flushed and dishevelled, to her father's cottage. Her peasant-lover, Marco Gaoli, would be round to see her that evening, as usual. But how could she meet him as heretofore? Ave Maria! what had befallen her? . . . She had met the handsome Englishman, with the pearly teeth, and the grey-blue eyes, and the masterful yet winning manners, and . . . they had gone for a walk in the Mori woods. . . . He had placed a diamond ring on her finger . . . had made her drink some sweet tasting liquor out of his flask,

and—the rest she could not bear to think of! . . . What would her father say if he knew it? What would Marco say—and do—if he knew it? What would her father confessor say?—and he must know it the next time she went to confession. . . . Ah! who could have suspected it? A *cavaliero*, so perfect in his address, despite his bad Italian . . . and an Englishman—a *galantuomo* by race! . . . God pardon her!

Aye, Teresa, God will pardon thee, never fear! Even although, three days later, having confessed thy unwilling sin to the aged priest, thou didst, in very shame to meet thy lover's eyes, wrap thy mantle around thy face and hurl thyself into the neighboring lake! Fear not, for God is merciful and reads all hearts. But even He will scarce find mercy for thy seducer. English? Yes; but there be bad men, poor child, amongst us English. God rest thee!

Dressed with extra scrupulous care, and, to do him justice, looking an exceptionally handsome man, Hugh Darrell returned to the villa rented by Lady Conyers at seven o'clock. As he had foreseen, he was received as the accepted suitor. Lady Conyers greeted him with a certain *empressement*. Ethel received him with more reserve, yet in a manner that made it plain she knew what was to follow. Indeed,

Lady Conyers made her own decision sufficiently plain by leaving the young couple together in the drawing-room after dinner. Hugh Darrell's eyes sparkled, as he seated himself upon a sofa beside his bride-elect.

"Miss Conyers—Ethel," he began, "to learn that I love you—that I have long loved you—cannot come to you as a surprise; you must long ago have divined it. Your mother favors my suit. Can I, dare I, hope that you love me a little bit in return? Will you be my wife?"

"Yes," was the reply, hesitatingly given. "I promised mamma that I would accept you. I will be your wife if you wish it, but I cannot honestly say that—I love you."

Hugh Darrell took the girl in his arms and kissed her with passionate fierceness. "I will make you love me, my pretty darling;" he whispered, again sealing his lips to hers, until the slight figure trembled in his embrace. And, before Darrell quitted the villa, the marriage was fixed to take place in one month's time.

Lady Conyers duly wrote to her solicitors instructing them to draw up a deed of settlement in conformity with Hugh Darrell's proposals, and this letter she showed to her prospective son-in-law. But she sent them (as she believed) a second private letter bidding them to satisfy themselves, by an interview with Darrell's solicitors, of that gentleman's

financial position. Needless to say that Darrell, who foresaw this move and was keenly on the alert, contrived to intercept this second despatch. Consequently, Messrs. Screwitt and Sharpe, obeying the only instructions which had reached them, merely forwarded the required deed without comment—ample proof in her ladyship's eyes that their inquiries had been satisfactory. This deed Darrell signed, in the presence of the British Consul, and the marriage duly took place. It had been arranged that the honeymoon trip should include a visit to England, where, as Darrell alleged, he had important business to transact, and, immediately after the ceremony, the newly-wedded couple journeyed northwards, leaving her ladyship to enjoy unfettered widowhood at Naples. Hugh Darrell had once more triumphed. Ethel Conyers was his.

## CHAPTER IX.

## DARRELL V. DYVER.

“BY Jove, that’s hot!” exclaimed the Hon. Bob Dyver, as his friend, Captain Heavyside, read out the announcement of the marriage from the *Times*, at the club. “Shows you what women are. Fancy her marrying the very man who got poor Griffin into that awful mess!”

“Yes,” assented the dragoon, “as you say, it is rather hot. I wonder the mother allowed it. She must know the man is no longer received anywhere.”

“She has been so much abroad,” rejoined the Hon. Bob, “that I expect she doesn’t quite realize Darrell’s position over here. If I were not so disgusted at the girl’s conduct, I should feel sorry for her. I believe Darrell to be the most consummate scoundrel I ever met, and it’s not hard to foresee the sort of husband he’ll make. Poor old Morley! It seems like yesterday that he was planning ways and means to marry Ethel Conyers himself. Should he by any chance learn that she has married his enemy, it will be a terrible blow to him; though,

for my part, I think I'd rather go to gaol than marry such a false-hearted girl as she has proved herself to be."

"Any chance of getting Griffin's sentence shortened?" queried the captain, who was a staunch believer in his innocence.

"I'm afraid not," answered Dyver, shaking his head mournfully. "I got the dad to bring all the influence he could command to bear upon the Home Secretary; but it seems the judge who tried the case is dead against the poor fellow. I can't even get an order to see him yet, though I hope to latter on."

"Then he has five years more to serve?" remarked Heavyside.

"Four," corrected his friend; "that is, if he keeps quiet. They knock off a year or so upon a seven years' sentence, for good conduct. I say, Dick, I wonder if it would be possible to work out some plan of escape? I've been studying the matter for a long time, and it seems to me that, by bribing a few of the warders, the thing might be managed."

"I'll chip in, old fellow, if you can see your way," answered the dragoon, heartily. "I'd risk all I'm worth, and my skin to boot, to see that poor boy free once more!"

"I knew you would, Dick," rejoined Dyver. "And, if it came to a scrapping match, you'd be very handy."

Captain Heavyside, be it remarked, was very

nearly as big a man as Morley Griffin himself, and a noted boxer.

"I'd do my best," said the dragoon, quietly. "Let me know if you see a chance, that's all."

The final result of a lengthy discussion between these two staunch, if also somewhat reckless, friends of Morley Griffin was, that they decided to run down to Princetown the following week, "upon a reconnoitring expedition," as the captain put it.

It is not a very difficult matter to obtain an order to visit a convict prison. A few lines from a Commissioner, or even from one of the higher-placed permanent officials in the Home Office, to the governor, are sufficient; and such a letter Dyver had no difficulty in procuring. Accompanied by his faithful henchman, Walters, he and Captain Heavyside accordingly traveled down to Princetown, as they had arranged, and established themselves at the best local inn, known as "The Spotted Dog." The next day they called upon Major S——, the governor of the gaol, presented their credentials, and were duly invited to luncheon, preparatory to an inspection of the place.

Major S—— was a rigid disciplinarian, a man who believed that in the body of every convict intrusted to his charge there lurked a demon, which could be exorcised only by the aid of punishment-cells and the cat; and, in the

main, he was possibly right. The trouble is that governors of gaols do not discriminate. They are supposed, in consideration of the large salary they draw, to make the character of each convict a special study; as a matter of fact they do nothing of the sort. Almost invariably retired Army men, with sufficient influence to secure the billet, they simply drop into the position as being worth so many hundreds a year, and are guided entirely by the reports of the permanent understrappers.

Major S—— was just such a type. Unpopular in his regiment, he had retired as captain, with brevet-rank as major; and, his family influence being strong, he had been hoisted into his present position over the heads of men who had grown grey in the penal service.

Having done justice to a fairly good luncheon, to which the chaplain and doctor had been invited, the Hon. Bob Dyver proceeded to business.

“You have a prisoner here, I regret to say, major,” he began, “who is one of my oldest and dearest friends—Morley Griffin.”

“Indeed!” replied the major, “I am sorry to hear that. Let me see, Morley Griffin, you say? I don’t seem to recollect the name, but then names become obliterated here. Do you know him, Mr. Robinson?”

“Yes,” assented the chaplain, “I know him. He is down on the register as Z 754—an ex-

tremely tall, fine man, serving a seven years' sentence for forgery."

"The same," remarked Dyver. "And I may add that in the opinion of all those who knew him best, including my friend Captain Heavyside and myself, he is entirely innocent of the crime of which he was convicted."

"I'd stake my life upon it," corroborated the dragoon, emphatically.

Major S—— shifted uneasily upon his chair.

"Your confidence in your friend does you both honor," he said, glancing at the chaplain. "But I am bound to say that, so far as my experience goes, justice seldom miscarries nowadays."

"It has miscarried in this case," persisted Dyver, "although I fear the chances of obtaining a reversal of the sentence are remote. To what remission would he be entitled upon a ticket-of-leave?"

"Fourteen months," was the reply. "And I now remember the man of whom you speak. He came down here with the reputation of being extremely violent and dangerous; but, so far, he has not been reported to me for bad conduct. And now, if you are ready, I will take you over the prison."

Preceded by two warders, the party accordingly went the round.

"I suppose, Major S——," observed Dyver,

“it would be against the rules to see my friend?”

“Well, yes,” answered the governor; “without an order from the Home Office, I could not go the length of giving you a private interview. But, as I understand he is working in the masons’ gang, I can manage to let you see him for a minute or two.”

There was much to be seen before they reached the scene of Morley Griffin’s labors. Many cells were opened and inspected. They passed through workshops innumerable, where their visit seemed to cause no little excitement, as, in obedience to the overseer’s commands, the quaintly-garbed toilers stood to attention. Everywhere they noticed the prevalence of the two great gaol characteristics: scrupulous cleanliness and rigid discipline.

“Yes,” replied Major S——, in response to a remark of Captain Heavyside; “we don’t encourage dirt and insubordination here. Labor is plentiful and punishment swift.”

They presently reached a spot where some new bakehouses were in course of erection, and, amongst the masons, the two friends soon discovered Morley Griffin, looking bigger than ever in his parti-colored convict garb. Strange to say, he did not at first recognize them.

“Z 754, fall out!” cried one of the attendant warders, in obedience to an order from the

governor. Z 754 promptly dropped a huge rock, which he was carrying, and approached. In another instant his two hands were locked in those of his old friends.

“Morley, dear old chap!” exclaimed Dyver, eagerly scanning the prisoner’s face. “At last Heavyside and I have managed to catch sight of you, thanks to the goodness of Major S——. Why, how well you are looking, eh, Dick?”

“Fit as a fiddle,” assented the dragoon. “I fancy a spell down here, at this sort of muscle-making work, would do us both a world of good. Couldn’t you take us in, Major S——, for a while?”

The governor laughed, a dry, official laugh.

“Qualify yourselves for admission,” he said, grimly, “and I daresay we’ll find room for you. But, you know, it is almost as troublesome to get into Dartmoor Gaol as it is to get out.”

The warders laughed in chorus at the great man’s joke, and even the listening convicts indulged in a broad grin.

Dyver saw that the time for conversation would necessarily be brief, and he made the most of it.

“I hope shortly to get an order from the Home Office to see you privately, old fellow,” he said, so that all might hear; “but meanwhile, rest assured that everything possible is

being done. Keep your heart up! All of the old set believe in you, and the truth is bound to come out ere long. By the way, my lawyers have seen yours, and they all agree that the Courts will never enforce that penalty clause in your uncle's Will."

"What of Ethel?" asked Griffin, eagerly.

"Abroad with her mother, and quite well, I believe," answered Dyver, who had not the heart to tell the whole truth. "But I'd try and get over that folly were I you, old chap. Stick to the bachelor-brigade, like Dick here and myself. Time enough to marry twenty years hence."

Morley Griffin smiled faintly. "As you once said, Bob," he remarked, "it is wonderful what a lot of matches never come off; but my entry holds good if hers does."

"Scratch it, Morley," rejoined Dyver, emphatically. "Best for both of you." Then, seeing a look on the governor's face that warned him the interview must close, he hurriedly whispered in Griffin's ear: "When we shake hands, be prepared for some paper."

Griffin nodded assent, and extended his hand to Heavyside first.

"Good-bye, old man," said the dragoon, as they exchanged a hearty grip. "We shall soon see the silver lining on the cloud."

"Of course we shall," added Dyver, dexterously slipping a small, folded packet into

Griffin's outstretched palm. "God bless you, dear old fellow!"

And so they left him, standing at attention out of respect for the governor.

The missive which had thus changed hands, and which Griffin seized an early opportunity of examining, consisted of a £50 note and the following written upon tissue-paper:—

"Heavyside and I have decided to make an effort to effect your escape. The judge blocks all my efforts at the Home Office. We shall try to square a couple of warders, and I dare say you will find some use for the accompanying £50.—R. D."

Morley Griffin contrived to read this over twice, and then, putting the paper into his mouth, chewed it to a pulp. The bank-note he secreted in one of his boots.

"Dear old Bob!" he muttered, as he resumed work. "He, at least, believes in me, and so does Heavyside. I wonder what their plan will be? No doubt I shall learn later on from one of the 'screws,' as they call the warders here. Escape? No easy matter from inside. I had intended waiting till they put me in the quarry-gang, but if it can be managed sooner, so much the better."

Meanwhile, Dyver and Heavyside, having thanked Major S—— for his hospitality and courtesy, returned to "The Spotted Dog,"

which they had learned was a favorite evening resort of the gaol officials when off duty. Such proved to be the case, for upon descending to the bar-parlor after dinner, they found it fairly well filled with warders. Now, warders are a thirsty race, and by no means averse to conversation with inquisitive strangers, provided the latter do the handsome thing in the matter of refreshments. Dyver's servant, Walters, had, moreover, made certain inquiries upon his own account, and the final outcome was that the two friends and a certain warder, Haythorpe, entered upon a lengthy and seemingly very interesting conversation, apart from the rest. It was not in Dyver's nature to waste time beating round the bush, and, having gauged his man, he quickly came to the point.

"I would give £500 to see my friend a free man," he said, coolly. "Can it be done?"

"Speak lower, sir," cautioned the warder. "This is a dangerous matter to talk about at Princetown. As to getting a prisoner away, I don't say as how it ain't to be done, and I ain't disputing but what your terms is liberal. But there'd have to be two, or it might be three, of us in the job, and that brings each one's share down considerable. Make it £750, sir, and I think I can work it."

"Well, £750 be it," answered Dyver; "but understand, my man, that I'll pay by results. I have told you who I am. My friend is a

captain in the Dragoon Guards. We both guarantee you the sum you name provided you fulfil your part of the contract. Meanwhile, here are £50 on account."

Warder Haythorpe pocketed the notes with a grunt of satisfaction. "It ain't to be expected, nor it ain't in reason, gentlemen, that you should pay £750 before the job's done, and I'm quite satisfied as how you'll keep your promise. What's more, gentlemen, I calls £50 uncommon handsome as earnest-money, and, you may take your 'davit, me and my mates will do our best. It will take a fortnight though to fix any sort of a plan. And the three of us (now I think of it, there must be three in the job) will have to be on duty the same night."

"All right," assented Dyver. "Let my friend, whom you know as Z 754, know of your intentions, and write to my London address to let me know when the attempt is to be made. I shall expect to hear from you within a fortnight."

"I'll write, sir, never fear," answered Haythorpe. "If I may make so bold, gentlemen, I'd suggest a cutter moored somewhere, not too far, off the coast. Getting out of gaol is one thing. Getting clear away is another."

"The fellow is right," observed Captain Heavyside, as the two friends sat in their own sitting-room. "It is easier to effect an escape than to avoid recapture. I shall ask Saville to

place his 20-tonner at my disposal for a few days when the time comes."

Now, had these conspiring young gentlemen deferred their return to London for twenty-four hours, they would have been startled to find Hugh Darrell established as a guest at "The Spotted Dog," where he engaged the private sitting-room they had vacated, announced himself to the landlord as Mr. Barrett, of London, and gave orders that should a certain Warder Jason inquire for him he was at once to be shown up. That same evening Warder Jason duly called, and was admitted to the presence of Mr. Barrett, of London.

"Your name is Jason?" queried the latter, casting a keen glance of scrutiny at his visitor, a thick-set, surly-looking individual, afflicted with an especially ugly squint.

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "Matthew Jason, at your sarvice."

"Well, it is to use your services, for which I will pay you handsomely, that I have sought you out. I have been given to understand that you are willing to obey orders without asking questions, provided I make it worth your while. Is that so?"

"The party as told you that, sir, knows Mat Jason as well as I knows myself," assented the visitor, with a cunning leer.

"Very well," continued Mr. Barrett, of Lon-

don; "help yourself to some of that brandy and listen to me."

"Thankee, sir," responded Jason, availing himself freely of this invitation.

"There is a convict down here whose name is Morley Griffin, but whom you perhaps know as Z 754—an extremely tall, powerful man——"

"Yes, sir," put in the warder, "I knows him, though he ain't come under my special charge as yet."

"Then you must manage to exchange duty with some other warder, so that he shall come under your special charge," rejoined Mr. Barrett. "Can you do this?"

"Yes, it can be worked," answered Jason. "He ain't no friend of yours, sir, I take it, this Z 754, and you wants me to make things 'ot for him?"

"He is my deadly enemy," said Mr. Barrett, savagely. "Were he to regain his freedom, either upon a ticket-of-leave or by the expiry of his sentence, my life would not be worth three days' purchase. Now, I am given to understand that a prisoner may be goaded into committing acts which would not only disqualify him for a ticket-of-leave, but might furthermore result in a prolongation of his original term."

"That's quite correct, sir," assented Jason, lowering his voice. "A 'screw' (as they calls us warders) wot has a 'nark' on a prisoner

can keep him in 'ot water until he grows desperate and does something as'll fetch him a hextra lagging."

"This Morley Griffin is an extremely violent man, when provoked," added Mr. Barrett, "and you should have no difficulty in goading him to desperation. Now, what I propose to you is this: make it your business so to goad him, and, for every year that you succeed in adding to his sentence, I will pay you £100, or, should he die in gaol, I will give you £500 cash down. The person who recommended you to me, and whom you know well, holds guarantees that I will keep my word. In the meanwhile, I will pay you £25 every three months for your current services. It depends upon yourself how soon you earn the larger sum, and here is the first quarter's money in advance. You understand me?"

"Yes, sir, I understand right enough," was the reply, as twenty-five sovereigns were counted into the outstretched hand. "Twenty-five pound a quarter to go on with. A lump sum of £100 for every year added to 754's lagging. Or £500 cash down if he dies. As you say, sir, I can trust the party as sent you down here to see you acts square, 'specially as it wouldn't pay to turn dog in a business of this sort—Mr. Hugh Darrell!"

Darrell started. It had formed no part of his plans that this scoundrel, whom he was

employing, should be aware of his identity ; but he quickly recovered himself.

“ I see you know my name,” he remarked, coolly. ‘ Of course, I took the precaution to change it upon a mission of this sort. I think nothing more remains to be said, except that the sooner you earn your reward the better I shall be pleased.’ ”

“ Aye, sir,” retorted Jason, helping himself unbidden to some more brandy, in the familiarity begotten of criminal partnership, “ and the £500 for choice, eh ? ”

With which parting shot, the warder gulped down his dose of the fiery spirit and departed to his night-duty in the gaol.

“ Insolent brute ! ” muttered Darrell, as he prepared to depart Londonwards. “ But what matters that so that he does my work, and does it thoroughly ? And, if looks can be trusted, he’ll stick at nothing to earn his blood-money ! ”

## CHAPTER X.

## DARTMOOR.

DURING the ten months that had elapsed since Morley Griffin bade adieu to Bob Dyver at the railway-station, he had ample opportunity to realize the truth of Warder Ricketts' statement that, compared to Pentonville, Dartmoor is a veritable hell upon earth. Herded with ruffians, whose companionship was contamination and whose every other word was a blasphemy or an obscenity, he shuddered to think that, in time, he, too, might lose his own self-respect and become even as they were. From the first he had constrained himself, reckless though he felt, to adopt a policy of rigid obedience to all the rules, hoping thereby to disarm suspicion and so secure a favorable chance of putting into effect the one plan ever uppermost in his mind—escape.

Some building-work was in progress within the gaol, and he, on account of his great strength, had been selected to perform some of the hardest portions of the labor. This he did willingly enough, feeling, indeed, glad of an opportunity for bringing his muscles into

active play. Moreover, there was always the hope that, when this work was completed, he would be drafted into the quarry-gang, which he regarded as an essential preliminary towards his freedom. Escape from within the prison itself seemed an absolute impossibility. Then the unexpected visit of Bob Dyver and Heavy-side, together with Bob's written message, had raised new hopes in his breast, and he anxiously awaited a further communication from one or other of the warders in Dyver's pay. The £50-note he contrived to secrete in the binding of his Bible placed in his cell. Within a week Warder Haythorpe found opportunity for a brief conversation.

“Your friends outside are coming down handsome,” he said, “and one of my mates is willing to stand in with me in the job. He'll be on the wicket one night next week. I shall be on duty in your gallery, and shall have a duplicate key of your cell door made from a cast. But the man on duty in the lower corridor will have to be squared too, and I don't know yet who it will be. So I can't say for certain what night it will be. Anyhow, if we can pass you through the wicket between us, you'll find a rope hanging at the southern end of the outer wall, and, upon the other side, your friend's servant will be waiting for you. After that, your friends will look after you and see that you get clear away.”

“What of you and your mates?” queried Griffin, whose good-nature prompted him to bestow a thought upon his proposed helpers. “It will go hardly with you if you are found guilty of assisting a prisoner to escape.”

“That’s true enough,” assented Haythorpe, “but we are paid to run the risk, and must trust to luck and hard-swearing to pull us through. The chap on the wicket will be found apparently stunned and half-choked, and, as the chief warder keeps all the cell-door keys, there’ll be nothing to show how your door was opened. It will most likely be set down to an oversight when the chief went his rounds. I shall admit having left my post for a few minutes to see the man in the other corridor, but that can’t mean much more than a reprimand. Indeed, I don’t care if they dismiss me. I’m getting sick of this billet.”

Bold, almost rash, as Haythorpe’s scheme appeared to be, it might nevertheless have come off successfully had he made no mistake about his third confederate, who proved to be none other than Matthew Jason. Haythorpe knew this officer to be “upon the cross,” as it is termed, that is, as one who was open to bribery; but, of course, he knew nothing of the compact previously made with Darrell.

“What’s the job worth?” asked Jason, bluntly, after the first few preliminary hints.

“Two hundred and fifty pounds each for the

three of us," was the reply, "and the money as safe as the bank."

"How am I to know that?" retorted Jason. "You can just tell your people, whoever they are, that I for one will have nothing to do with this job unless I gets £100 down aforehand;" and from this decision he refused to recede an inch.

Dyver, informed of this hitch, sent the required sum, and Jason professed to be content. Morley Griffin's hopes soared high when Haythorpe told him that the following night had been fixed upon for his escape. In the exuberance of his joy, he told that friendly warder of the £50 concealed in his Bible, and bade him secure it for his own use—an injunction which Haythorpe lost no time in obeying, with a profusion of thanks.

The next morning, whilst Griffin was at work, and counting the hours that had yet to elapse ere he should be a free man, the chief warder was astounded to find amongst his correspondence an execrably written letter, which ran as follows:—

*"Sir, take a frends advice and shift Z 754 to a diffurent Cell at wonst. Thares a plant to get him away wich shiftin him will block it.—A Frend."*

For some moments the chief warder stared

at this startling communication, and then laughed incredulously. A plan to free a prisoner from Dartmoor Gaol! The thing was too absurd for serious consideration. Possibly Z 754 had been trying to tamper with his cell—such attempts were not unknown. A careful inspection would soon settle that point. And, whilst on his morning rounds, the chief warder took occasion to examine the cell in question minutely; but not the faintest suspicious mark or sign could he discover. Haythorpe, who accompanied him, watched this proceeding uneasily; he at once guessed that the chief had a suspicion of something amiss, but how much did he know or suspect?

“Have Z 754’s bedding shifted to one of the new cells,” said his superior, as though by way of afterthought, as he departed.

“Very well, sir,” answered Haythorpe, calmly enough. But he knew now that, somehow or other, some inkling of the prisoner’s design had leaked out, and instinctively he fixed upon Jason in his own mind as the probable traitor. He knew him to be a man of no principle whatever. What more likely than that, having secured £100 in advance, he had taken measures to avoid all further risk by quietly putting the chief warder upon his guard, and so making the execution of the plan quite impossible?

“Great Scott!” muttered Haythorpe, with a shudder. “What a show-up there’d have been

had the chief kept his suspicions to himself and merely kept careful watch on the cell! He'd have caught me red-handed! Well, I must let the others know the game is up, though I'd wager all I'm worth Jason knows it already. Poor 754! What an awful sell it will be for him! Anyhow, I've done my best, as I shall take care to explain to the Hon. Dyver and his friend."

Jason received Haythorpe's news with obviously affected surprise. "I expect them two gentlemen has been talking too loud," he remarked, "and so put the job away. You and me'll have to be extry careful," he added, "and I daresay as how they'll stand something for the risks we ran. Not that I'm grumbling: that hundred about squares my trouble. Pity you didn't look after yourself a bit, too, Jem Haythorpe!" And Jason squinted at his companion with fiendish glee.

Haythorpe was off duty at mid-day, and at once betook himself to "The Spotted Dog" to report the impossibility of putting the plans arranged upon into execution. Both Dyver and Heavyside were furious.

"One of you three warders must have betrayed the scheme!" cried Dyver. "The fellow, most likely, who insisted upon the £100 in advance. Fool that I was to let him have it! I might have guessed he'd prefer a safe £100 to a risky £250."

Haythorpe admitted that his own suspicions ran in the same direction. Still, as he pointed out, it was evident that the authorities had received nothing but a vague hint to keep a watchful eye upon Z 754, and had no suspicion of the real nature of the plot. Who could say that, later on, the scheme might not be successfully carried out? Meanwhile he pledged himself to do all that he could to make their friend's position more comfortable. He undertook, moreover, to let them know at once should a favorable opportunity present itself. And, in the end, deriving what little comfort they could from these assurances, Dyver and Heavyside returned dejected to London to await the issue of events.

"This is the second time we've missed fire," growled the sturdy groom, Walters. "Perhaps next time the job will come off!"

Morley Griffin had no inkling of the disastrous news in store for him until he learned at bed-time that he was no longer to occupy his former cell.

"Keep yourself cool," said Haythorpe, in low, guarded tones, as he called him up to tell him of his change of quarters. "The chief suspects something, and has ordered me to shift your bedding to one of the new cells. That, of course, upsets all our plans for the present."

Griffin ground his teeth to keep back the ex-

clamation of bitter disappointment that rose to his lips.

“One of your mates must have turned traitor, then,” he whispered, fiercely.

“Yes,” assented Haythorpe. “I believe that’s what happened. He got nervous about the risks of detection, as the time drew near, and managed to give the chief a hint to put you in a different cell, though he was careful not to give any details, for his own sake. So there’s just a vague suspicion against you and no more. That will blow over by-and-by, if you keep quiet, and, as I told your friends outside to-day, a better chance may present itself. They were awful disappointed when I told ’em what had happened, and went back to London quite cut-up like. Now, be careful of Jason, who has charge of the new cells. He’s a bad lot; and I fancy, from odd remarks he has let fall, that he has a ‘down’ on you.”

“Why?” asked Griffin. “He scarcely knows me by sight.”

“Can’t say,” was the reply. “I fancy you have some enemy outside. Do you understand? Anyhow, don’t give Jason a chance to report you.”

Griffin took the hint, and was on his guard against his new overseer. Yet, within three days, the latter discovered a piece of tobacco in No. 754’s bedding, and reported him for being in possession of the contraband weed.

When brought to answer the charge, Griffin stoutly denied it, asserting (with perfect truth) that he did not use tobacco, and that the incriminating morsel, if found in his bedding at all, must have been placed there by someone else.

This defence was summarily rejected by the governor, who sentenced the prisoner to three days' solitary confinement, upon bread and water, and to the loss of certain good-conduct marks, which would have the effect of adding several weeks to his sentence. This punishment Griffin endured without any comment.

A week later Jason asked him some trivial question in his cell, by way of preliminary, and then, producing a newspaper, showed him a marked paragraph. It was an announcement of the marriage of Ethel Conyers to Hugh Darrell.

Morley Griffin staggered as though struck by a blow. Then he recovered himself. "Why do you show me this?" he asked, hoarsely.

"Because I happen to know Mr. Darrell," was the reply, "and have promised him to keep an eye on you. I rather fancy he wants you to stay here, eh?"

Morley gave a bitter laugh. "Does that mean that he has bribed you to keep me here?" he inquired fiercely.

"Take it that way, if you like," replied Jason. "It's worth my while, anyhow, to make things

hot here for you, unless you make it still better worth my while to leave you alone."

"You scoundrel!" retorted Morley, seizing his tormentor by the throat. "So sure as you again bring any of your trumped-up charges against me, I'll strangle you!" And, with a jerk, he sent the warder reeling into the corridor.

That same evening he was charged with using insulting and threatening language, and in defence he described exactly what had taken place. Of course, Jason gave an entirely different version, and equally, of course, his version was accepted. Sentence: Three days' more solitary confinement in the dark cells, with a further loss of good marks.

It is not too much to say that this second infliction of undeserved punishment, added to the knowledge that Hugh Darrell was plainly seeking to kill him by inches, or to incite him to the commission of some offence which would postpone his release indefinitely, converted Morley Griffin, for the time at least, into a thoroughly reckless, desperate man. His thoughts became blacker than the darkness which surrounded him. He pictured himself as one marked out to be the butt of unmerited human vengeance; and, in his despair, he vowed that he too would be avenged if his life paid the penalty.

Truly his case was a hard one. For the

mere fact of his having dared to love a girl sought by an unscrupulous foe, he had been betrayed into penal servitude, condemned to pass many of the best years of his life in the most loathsome and degrading of all forms of slavery. The girl whom he had loved had at last thrown herself into the arms of his betrayer, who was now plotting his destruction by bribing one of his gaolers to goad him to madness, by having him continually punished for offences which he had not committed. This man, Jason, had threatened to continue his persecution, and his position as warder gave him every facility for doing so. His next move would doubtless be to have him flogged; it was a wonder he had not already accused him of assaulting him in the cell. Doubtless he was proceeding by degrees, in hopes of bringing him round to his terms; perhaps he thought that the dark cells would suffice. What if he consented to these terms, and, through Bob Dyvers's instrumentality, outbid Hugh Darrell? With a bitter oath, Morley Griffin thrust this idea from his mind; and then he deliberately weighed the measure of retaliation which he would inflict upon his dastardly persecutor. He had ample time for reflection.

If he submitted in silence and unresistingly to the endless round of punishments in store for him, his health, and perhaps also his reason, would give way; and this was clearly Hugh

Darrell's object in bribing Jason to persecute him. Passive endurance was, therefore, out of the question.

If he assaulted him, say in the presence of witnesses, he would be flogged and subjected to further punishment in the dark cells. That would merely be playing into Jason's hands.

If he killed him (and Griffin almost convinced himself that the man deserved to be killed like a venomous reptile), and then he would be hanged himself, and his hopes of again meeting Hugh Darrell would, of course, be gone for ever.

There remained the alternative of inflicting upon him injuries which should incapacitate him for services as a warder. This would mean an increment of several years to his sentence, in addition to a flogging. But, as he was firmly resolved to effect his escape long before his present time expired, and infinitely preferred being flogged to being starved and harassed to death, this was the course he finally decided to follow.

Then his thoughts centred upon Ethel Conyers, and, in the bitterness of his heart, he cursed her for a false jade. This was not altogether just. The girl was neither better nor worse than hundreds of the other butterflies of society that are on view and on sale in the marriage-market every London season. But Morley Griffin, as her accepted lover, was naturally

disposed to take a very black view indeed of her ready transference of her affections to his deadly enemy. He hugged himself with the thought that *when* he settled scores with Hugh Darrell, she, too, should share in the atonement. And then, with a savage sneer against her and her sex, he banished her from his thoughts.

When Morley's three days were up, and he once more emerged into the light of day, he remained true to his set resolve, and merely awaited an opportunity of carrying it into effect. This did not present itself for more than a week. Jason, apparently with the design of allowing an interval for reflection between his attacks, forbode to molest him during that period. Then he once more presented himself in his victim's cell, keeping, however, a watchful eye on the latter's movements.

"Well!" he said; "have you thought that matter out?"

"Yes," answered Morley, "I have."

"And which is it to be—peace or war?" inquired his janitor

"War!" hissed Morley, seizing the intruder, with a swift grip, by the throat, and dragging him into the cell . . .

Five minutes later a huddled-up heap of humanity lay moaning and groaning in the corridor, and Morley Griffin, calling upon another warder, gave himself, so to speak, into custody as the aggressor upon Warder Jason. He had

amply fulfilled his threat. In addition to being terribly pummelled, Jason had sustained a compound fracture of the left leg, which would probably incapacitate him from further active service. The injured man was at once carried off to the infirmary, and Morley was as promptly brought before the governor.

Now, a great piece of good fortune had befallen Morley; for during the brief scuffle (such a scuffle as one may see when a bull terrier is worrying a rat) a letter had fallen from Jason's pocket, the handwriting of which he had at once recognized as Hugh Darrell's. He had read it, and it contained ample proofs of the understanding that existed between the writer and Jason. Consequently, when Morley had confessed to the assault, and had stated his reasons for committing it, the production of this letter was very strong confirmatory evidence.

"I have made a note of your statement, prisoner," said the governor, "and I shall retain the letter. The case is too serious for me to adjudicate upon. You will, in due course, be tried by one of the directors."

In the result, the letter saved Morley from the full measure of the exemplary punishment which would otherwise most certainly have been meted out to him. Nothing, his judge decided, could justify an attack by a prisoner upon a warder; but, in view of the extreme provoca-

tion received, a light sentence only would be inflicted, and without the customary flogging. This "light" sentence resolved itself into the total loss of the remission upon his original sentence, to which he might otherwise become entitled, and to three successive incarcerations of three days each, in the dark cells, at intervals of a month.

"And this you call justice!" exclaimed Morley, bitterly, when the decision was pronounced. Then he broke out into a passionate denunciation of the wrongs which had been inflicted upon him, such as that Director of Her Majesty's Gaols, had never listened to before. And when, at length, a strong posse of warders succeeded in removing him, his voice still rang out loudly and furiously through the passages that led to the punishment cells.

It may here be mentioned that Warder Jason never again appeared in uniform; though, whether he was dismissed or allowed to retire, this true chronicle recordeth not.

And thus it came about that at the end of a year from his arrival, Convict No. 754 knew Dartmoor to be in very sooth a hell upon earth, and was himself very generally regarded by those in authority as the most dangerous devil in it.

The rough brutes by whom he was surrounded held him in very considerable dread, for he was prompt to resent the smallest ap-

proach to a liberty with a blow, and none cared for a second. He had pounded one ruffian to a jelly for humorously remarking that "he looked as though some other bloke had spliced on to his best girl."

Upon another occasion, he had attacked and badly mauled three "lifers" for bullying a lad, who appealed to him for protection. Brute force is the one quality these animals respect, and No. 754, or "Gentleman Jack," as he was generally termed, was notoriously the strongest man and the most desperate fighter of them all. One other, indeed, was held to run him pretty close, at least in sheer strength. This was No. 916, commonly called "The Wolf," a hugh Cornishman, of whom it was said that he could carry more hundred-weights upon his back than any man in England. Yet, strange to say, although constantly thrown together, so far from there being any rivalry between the two giants, they seemed to be on fairly good terms, especially after a preliminary battle, in which "Gentleman Jack" had conclusively demonstrated his superiority, with the fists at any rate. Certain it is that they never missed an opportunity of talking together, whether openly, or in that lip language intelligible only to convicts.

"The Wolf" was a "lifer," reprieved from the gallows. As utterly repulsive a human monster as ever the laws of God or man allowed

to live, and with a life-record of such crimes as would have caused many of the least scrupulous members of the chain-gang to shudder, had they but known of them. One such episode, which "The Wolf" was fond of narrating, bears upon this narrative.

He had at one time been a sailor, and was ship-wrecked in the Indian Ocean. He and a number of the crew found temporary safety in one of the ship's boats, and very badly provided with provisions, drifted about in hopes of being seen and rescued by some passing vessel. Soon famine stared them in the face, and the sailor's last, desperate resource—that of drawing lots for one victim to become food for the rest—was resorted to.

"Now, ye see, mates," explained "The Wolf," "as how I never could abide wi' an empty stummick. When I be proper hungry, I'se got to eat summat. I'd liever cut off and eat my own arm nor go without. Wal, t' way we drawed wur by numbers—lowest t' die. We'd drawed twice, and t' third time I tell 'ee, I had a near squeak for 't. I drawed the durned number meself! Tell 'ee, mates, at first I felt like making a fight for 't. But they was seven against me, and besides I was hungry as they wur, or wussur mebbe, and I couldn't bear the idea of dyin' with an empty stummick. So, makin' b'lieve I was sayin a prayer same as t' other two coves had done, I gets my grip upon

't gullet of t' bosun, as was a-lyin' down for'ard very weak like. In coorse I soon chokes him, and then I slews round, and sez I: "'Tain't no manner of use a-killin of me just yit. Here's t' bosun as has just pegged out!' Wal, we eats him, and next day we sights a Swedish barque, and gets picked up. Folks does say as how man's flesh drives them as eats it crazy-like. That's all a bloomin' yarn. It's a sight better nor an empty stummick, any road!"

This was the monster whom Morley Griffin cultivated as an acquaintance; and no further illustration need be given of the frame of mind to which his black despair had driven him. But, of course, he had a motive in so doing. He and "The Wolf" were destined shortly for work with the chain-gang in the quarries; and for specially heavy labor in cramped spaces, they would most probably, on account of their gigantic strength, be chained together. It would, in this event, be necessary to secure "The Wolf's" co-operation in a dash for freedom. Moreover, he knew every inch of the moor, which was a very important consideration. On his side, "The Wolf" was perfectly willing to make the attempt, and their frequent conversations all had reference to the details of their plan.

Luck favored them. As he had foreseen, an overseer told Morley Griffin one evening that he would next day be yoked with "The Wolf,"

for ledge-work in a distant quarry; and the young giant told himself that, with anything like a reasonable opportunity, this should be his last night in a Dartmoor cell.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE ESCAPE.

IT was a typical October morning, chilly, damp, and grey, as the quarry gang, under strong escort, was mustered and dispatched to the scene of labor, distant some two miles from the prison. In all, the gang numbered some thirty men, of whom more than one-half were ironed in couples by the ankles. With them went two overseers to direct operations, and eight warders, armed with rifles, to guard against all possibility of outbreak or attempt at escape. Prominent amongst the prisoners towered the figures of Morley Griffin and "The Wolf"; and, from the sullen fierceness of the latter's looks, as his eyes wandered from the escort to his companion's face, it was evident that something untoward had happened.

"Eight of 'em," he whispered, hoarsely. "They didn't use to send more nor four or five at most. And these irons wot they've guv us is extry thick 'uns. 'Tain't no go, Master." For some reason or other (possibly begotten of instinctive respect), he always addressed Morley as "Master."

“Hold your confounded tongue!” was the reply, in the same growling undertone. “Can’t you see they’re watching us? How often do you want to be told that we must wait for our chance? It may be to-day or it may be next month, but sooner or later it *must* come!”

The Cornishman gave a grunt of sulky acquiescence and, artfully conveying a piece of tobacco to his mouth, plodded along in silence. It was his great boast that he was never without “snout” (which is thieves’ argot for the prohibited luxury).

Morley was himself bitterly disappointed to see the extra precautions that had been taken, more especially as it speedily became apparent that three of the warders had been specially detailed off to watch him and “The Wolf.” The authorities clearly suspected his design, and, whilst their official dignity debarred them from openly admitting the possibility of its accomplishment by keeping him within the prison walls, they had taken effective measures to block it. For two heavily ironed men to escape from the custody of eight well-armed warders was clearly beyond the range of probabilities.

The chapter of accidents, however, may upset the most careful calculations. At about three o’clock, one of the sudden, heavy mists for which Dartmoor is notorious arose; and, as is invariably done in such a case, the senior

warder immediately ordered the gang to "knock off" work, which the men did willingly enough.

"Fall in there! Come, hurry up!" came the command, as the prisoners slouched through the fast deepening mist into double file. "Forward! Quick March!" And the column started prisonwards to the accompaniment of the clanking irons.

Thicker and thicker grew the mist, until it became difficult for those in the rearmost ranks to make out the head of the column. Morley Griffin's heart beat fast. Such an opportunity might not occur again.

"Now for it!" he bawled into the ear of his companion, and, swerving suddenly to one side, the two desperadoes hobbled as quickly as they could into the thickening fog. Disregarding the escort's challenge to halt, they threw themselves prone to earth, just in time to allow a volley of bullets to whistle over their heads. Then they crawled upon their hands and knees for a short distance and, springing to their feet, hastened back towards the quarry which they had just left. They could now see nothing of the column, and, of course, the warders could see nothing of them, although from the continuous discharge of the rifles, it was evident that they stood in considerable danger from chance shots. It probably did not occur to the warders that they would take the direction of the

quarry; and yet Morley saw at once that their first effort must be to break their fetters by means of one of the sledge-hammers left there. This idea he hurriedly communicated to "The Wolf," whose knowledge of the ground now stood them in good stead.

"All right, Master," he answered. "I could find the tools blindfold. Come along!"

In a few minutes they reached the spot where the sledges were lying. Bidding his companion to lie prone and to hold the head of a sledge as an anvil beneath the bars of the chain, Morley brought down a second sledge with the full force of his mighty right arm. It was impossible to wield the weapon with both hands, from the position of the chain: and no one, save a giant, could have swung the ponderous hammer in one hand. The jar upon their limbs was agonizing, and the risk of breaking the bones of the leg considerable; but the pain and the risk had to be encountered. It took nearly a dozen blows before the bar finally snapped and they were freed from one another, although, of course, each still retained an iron anklet and a portion of the broken chain.

At this moment the loud boom of a cannon proclaimed that the prison officials understood what had occurred, and thus announced to the many hundreds of free laborers resident upon the moor that a prisoner or prisoners had es-

caped, and that there was blood-money to be earned.

“Now, then!” cried Morley Griffin. “You know the way. Steer straight for some outlying hamlet where there’s a forge. We must get these irons off, first thing. After that, we must trust to chance to get hold of some clothes, and then we’ll have a show of getting clear away.”

“Right y’ are, Master!” replied “The Wolf.” “Keep ye close on my heels!”

And away they started through the dense fog at as near an approach to a run as their fetters would permit.

Through the grey mist they ran, or tried to run, for fully a mile, Morley following his companion’s lead blindly; and, indeed, “The Wolf” seemed to have no hesitation about his course. Suddenly he heard a warning cry, felt himself tripping over a prostrate body, and fell—fell—fell into what seemed to be a bottomless abyss!

“Gone, by G——!” muttered “The Wolf,” craning his neck over a precipitous edge. “I’d have sworn t’ Black Gap wur a good furlong t’ other gait! . . . He’s a stiff ’un by now, is the Master, and ’tain’t no matter of use me waitin’ here!” So saying, “The Wolf” resumed his jog-trog in an easterly direction, intent doubtless upon plundering a forge or a farm-house, or both.

Had Morley Griffin fallen as his companion

supposed, certain death awaited him. The Black Gap is nothing else than a yawning chasm, giving upon a disused quarry, and with an almost sheer descent of nearly two hundred feet. As it happened, however, he chanced to fall at almost the only spot where the descent is not quite sheer, a projecting slope, covered with stunted timber and undergrowth, arresting his downward course some forty feet below the surface. He felt the fearful crash, which seemed to shatter every bone in his body, was dimly conscious of rolling over and of instinctively clutching at the tangled undergrowth, and then he remembered no more.

When he recovered consciousness, the moon was shining fitfully through dense masses of flying scud, and he was able to make out his position. He had rolled to within a yard of the edge of the slope, where the trunk and protruding roots of a dwarf ash had arrested his downward progress. Forty feet above was the edge from which he had fallen; more than a hundred feet below was a small, darkly-gleaming surface, which he knew to be water, surrounded by broken masses of rock. He was in great pain; his body seemed to be one large bruise; and he was deadly cold. His first impulse was to ascertain how many of his bones had escaped fracture. To his intense relief, his limbs were all sound, though his right ankle was badly sprained and two of his smaller ribs

appeared to be broken. His head, face, and hands, too, had been cut and skinned in places ; but beyond these minor injuries and a general sensation of agonizing soreness, he was practically unhurt.

Then arose the momentous question, how could he extricate himself from his critical position? To attempt to ascend was clearly hopeless ; the ledge upon which he lay was an isolated projection. Below were the rocks and the water. Craning his neck over the edge, he dropped a stone and counted. It took a little over two seconds to strike the water, which he therefore judged must be about one hundred and twenty feet from where he lay. Doubtless there existed some means of exit from the bottom of the quarry, could he but reach it. Yet to dive from such a fearful height, into a small pool of possibly shallow water, looked like deliberate suicide.

Morley reflected. If he waited, no doubt a search-party would discover him and seek to rescue him by means of ropes. If "The Wolf" were re-captured (as, alone, he most likely would be) he would certainly tell of his companion's fate. At any moment a search-party might appear upon the scene, and this to him meant death ; for he had sworn to himself that he would never again enter the prison alive. The dive might mean death also ; it certainly would, if the water were shallow or if he missed

it and struck upon a rock. But it offered at least a chance of life, and this chance he determined to take. Despite his efforts to be quite steady, his breath came hard and quick through his set teeth as he stood upon the brink nerving himself for the plunge. Then he inflated his lungs to their fullest, poised himself for a second, his hands glued to his thighs, and sprang feet foremost into the abyss!

The water was deep, and, assisted by the weight of his leg-irons, he struck it vertically as a descending arrow. Presently he rose to the surface and somewhat feebly (for he was half dazed, and his fetters hampered him greatly) swam to a spot where a rift in the encircling wall of rock seemed to indicate an exit of some sort.

For several minutes after dragging himself from the water he lay unable to move, panting, and half frozen. But he by-and-by recovered himself and, having squeezed out his wet clothes, followed the opening which he had discovered. It gave upon a pathway, steep and very uneven, which had, at some period or other, been used in the transport of the quarry-stone. A quarter of an hour later he stood, beneath the cloud-swept sky, upon the Moor. A keen wind seemed to drive the moisture of his garments into his very bones, and his teeth rattled like castanets. His sprained ankle caused him acute suffering at every step, whilst the weight

of the irons which encircled his other leg made it yet more difficult for him to limp along. Nevertheless, the thought of his last desperate feat nerved him for further effort, and he resolutely set his face southward, with but one immediate object in view—to gain a human habitation of some sort where, by entreaties or by force, he might procure a change of raiment, food, and, above all, a file.

How interminable seemed that dreary expanse of Moor! In the distance he could discern a belt of timber, towards which he was making his way; but this was still several miles off and, in his crippled condition, each step that he took was martyrdom. Several times he nearly decided to throw himself prone amongst the bracken and await the death which he had sworn should precede recapture; but his dauntless courage still kept him moving. After many hours of torture, he reached a copse and lost no time in breaking off a stout sapling to serve as a staff. The moon by this time was waning, and he struggled forward lest darkness should overtake him in the wood. Then, unless his eyes had deceived him, he saw a faint light which, as he advanced towards it, disappeared, only to reappear a minute later. With desperate eagerness he staggered onwards until he stood within a few yards of where it had last been visible.

Suddenly, and as though arising from the

earth, a man confronted him. "Who are you?" he inquired, gruffly, "and what are you doing here?"

"I saw a light and followed it," answered Morley, simply. "I am half dead with wet, cold, and hunger."

"Good passports, whoever you are, to fire and food," said the stranger. "Come; follow me. Lame, eh?"

"Yes," assented the fugitive, limping after his new guide. Presently they reached a cottage, half hidden in the dense timber growth.

The stranger paused. "Tramp?" he asked, briefly.

"No," was the reply. "I have irons on my leg and the Government brand on my clothes. I escaped last evening, or this evening—I know not which—from the chain-gang."

The stranger gave a long, soft whistle. "An escaped convict!" he exclaimed. "Well, that's no reason why you should perish of cold and hunger; but it's a very good reason for cutting short your stay here. The warders will overhaul Dene Hollow to a certainty at daybreak. However, come inside, and welcome!"

For the first time since his arrival at Dartmoor, Morley Griffin felt his heart soften towards his fellow-man. What Good Samaritan could this be who, knowing what he was, thus offered him food and warmth? Together

they entered a large, low-roofed kitchen, lighted only by a blazing log upon the hearth. A very old woman was seated at one side, crooning to herself ; whilst a young girl was preparing the table for supper. An old-fashioned clock ticked solemnly in a corner, and indicated five minutes to eleven as the hour. The bright glow of the fire was reflected from burnished cooking utensils, and lit up the huge dresser with its rows of crockery ware. Everything around spelt comfort in unmistakable characters.

Involuntarily, Morley slunk into the corner nearest the door, which was also the darkest, at the same time glancing hurriedly at his conductor. A tall, thick-set man about fifty years of age, dressed in a rough tweed suit, indicative of no particular calling, but distinctly not of bucolic cut. His accent, too, had struck Morley as that of an educated man ; indeed, he had half expected to see him in clerical garb.

“ Myra,” said his host, “ I have brought with me a guest, and a hungry one. See that supper does not run short, child.”

Myra glanced timidly at the stranger and, even in the dim light of the corner, could not fail to recognize the hideous convict garb, familiar to all residents around Dartmoor. Yet, beyond a slight start, she betrayed no surprise, and proceeded to make sundry additions to the meal in the quietest manner possible.

Her father surveyed his guest attentively,

and then, apparently divining the cause of his embarrassment, beckoned to him to follow, and led him into a well-furnished bedroom where, also, a good fire was burning.

“Rightly or wrongly,” he remarked, “I’ve taken it into my head that there is as much good as bad in you. Anyhow, I’m going to give you a better chance of escape than you otherwise would have. Peel off those tell-tale wet clothes, rub yourself dry before the fire, and put on what I’m going to hunt you up.”

In a few minutes he produced from a wardrobe an old but warm suit of clothes and some under-wear.

“Whilst you’re changing,” he added, “I’ll fetch a couple of tools to knock off the irons. There! Never mind thanks. You *look* them quite enough for me.”

Morley was still rough-towelling his muscular shoulders and chest when his host returned with a hammer, a file, and a steel punch, with which he at once attacked the fetters.

“Ever been in the show business?” he inquired, glancing at the young giant’s swelling biceps. “One seldom sees muscles like yours except amongst professionals.”

“No,” answered Morley, “but I used to be considered as strong as most of them.”

“So I should imagine,” rejoined the other, filing away at the head of the rivet. “I got amongst them for once, and used to show as

the Fire King. There! now stand steady a moment!" And, with a few blows upon the punch, the irons fell upon the floor. "What's up with your other ankle? Looks swollen. Sprain, eh? By George, yes! and a bad one too. You won't be fit to walk for a week at least."

"Then I must hop," said Morley, "for, with the splendid chance your clothes give me of escape, I shall get away as far and as fast as I can, if I have to crawl on all fours."

"Humph!" was his host's comment. "Well, at all events, come and eat your supper. I must say the clothes (although they *are* a tight fit) have effected a great improvement in your appearance."

The two men sat down to a substantial meal, Myra waiting upon them. The old woman (a worn-out circus rider, as Morley learned) had retired. It is wonderful what an effect a good supper, washed down by old ale, can produce upon a healthy young man situated as he was. It was the first pleasant hour he had passed since his arrest, and lost nothing by contrast with his late terrible experiences. With his odious convict's dress he seemed to have thrown off the moroseness into which he had habitually sunk, and to resume much of his former self.

He saw plainly that his host was devoured by curiosity (or, it might be, by a worthier motive) to learn his story; and so, merely suppressing

names, he briefly narrated it. He probably told it well, and with a ring of truth that forced conviction upon his hearers, for they listened with breathless attention. Late as was the hour, her father made no objection to Myra's sitting up to hear it to the end, which she did—hanging upon Morley's words, as though spell-bound. When he came to describe his fall and subsequent dive at the Black Gap, his host sprang to his feet in irrepressible excitement.

“By Heaven!” he cried. “A *guilty* man, who would risk *that* for freedom, deserves it! But a man, a gentleman, betrayed into servitude—See here, sir! I had intended to bid you God-speed this very night, so soon as your hunger was appeased. And, were your ankle sound, I would still say go—for your own sake. But, as it is, we must make shift to hide you until you are able to walk. With the hue and cry that will be raised after you and the other prisoner, it would be madness to dream of concealing you here. Fortunately, however, I have a retreat where you will be safe from all pursuit, and, though it's a rough sort of place, the sooner you gain it the better. It is impossible to say at what hour a search-party may not arrive to scour the neighborhood. Myra, child, put up some food in a basket, and fetch some thick blankets.”

The girl eagerly obeyed, whilst her father gave a great-coat and a warm cap to his guest,

together with a stout stick to assist him in walking. Then throwing the blankets across Morley's shoulders and bidding him take his arm, they sallied forth into the night, Myra following with the basket.

## CHAPTER XII.

## DENE HOLLOW.

DESPITE the assistance of his host's supporting arm and of his stick, it was with the utmost difficulty and in very acute pain that Morley managed to limp along. At a distance of about a quarter of a mile from the cottage, the sound of falling water became audible, and, bidding Morley await their return, father and daughter cautiously groped their way in advance. Presently the former came back.

"Give me the blankets," he said. "You'll have to crawl after me as best as you can for about twenty yards. I'll show a light when we come to a man-hole, where there's a ladder by which we'll have to descend."

Obedying these instructions, Morley presently found himself in a fair-sized grotto or cave, some thirty feet below the surface. His guide at once lit a large suspended lamp, by the light of which he made out what appeared to be a furnace surmounted by a boiler, from which ran a number of spiral-shaped tubes, all terminating in a large earthenware jar. He scarcely needed to be told that this was a still, and that his

benefactor was simply a manufacturer of contraband spirits. A second smaller cave was roughly fitted up as a sort of sitting-room, with cooking appliances, a camp-bedstead, a table, some chairs, and a few books upon a hanging-shelf. Myra, who had of course preceded them, was busy arranging the contents of the basket in a small cupboard.

“You can guess the nature of my business, I suppose,” remarked his host. “My name is Walter Gradwell, and I am the nearest approach to the old-fashioned smuggler possible, I imagine, nowadays. I do as much or as little trade as I choose. I can always find a market for my stuff, and, as there are not half-a-dozen men in the country who know what my occupation is, and as they are all in the same swim, I run but little risk. No one not in the secret could possibly discover the entrance to this place. Perhaps you’ll see me at work here tomorrow, unless I find too many, on the lookout for you, to leave home safely. Anyhow, I’ll come as soon as possible. Meanwhile, you’ll find plenty to eat and drink here, and there are a few standard books to help you kill the time. So make yourself as snug as you can, and make your mind easy as regards any risk of recapture whilst you are here. Come along, Myra. Good-bye for the present.”

And with a hearty handshake, supplemented by a pretty little curtsy and a half-timid “Good-

night" from Myra, Walter Gradwell and his daughter ascended the ladder and left their guest to his own reflections, followed by the latter's heartfelt protestations of his gratitude.

Left to himself, Morley sat down for a few minutes to think over the marvellous good fortune that had befallen him. A few short hours ago he was a desperate and despairing man in the very last depths of wretchedness, physical and mental. Now he was assured of food and shelter, he was comfortably clad, and he was apparently safe from his pursuers. Perhaps he might be allowed to stay on until pursuit should have died out, in the belief that he had perished upon the moor or had escaped to the coast. He found some rather fiery spirits in the cupboard, together with a pipe and tobacco. With a portion of the spirits he prepared a lotion for his sprained ankle; and then, mixing himself a weak glass of grog, he lay down and smoked and thought.

One by one the events of the bitter Past rose before him, and his face hardened into a terrible expression as he repeated the name of the false friend to whom he owed the shipwreck of his young life.

"Aye," he muttered, "determination such as mine *must* succeed; even the chapter of accidents at last favors me. Let me but recover the use of my leg, and I'll soon be upon his track. I wonder if he will see a report of my

escape in the newspapers? If so, *he'll* not believe in my death! He will hurry away to hide himself abroad, most likely. But, by Heaven! I'll track him down, if I have to follow him to the remotest corner of the earth! And when I do—I'll kill him, for the venomous reptile that he is!"

There was no trace of wild passion in all this. It was simply the fixed resolve of a determined man to avenge himself upon his foe. Some thought he gave to Ethel Conyers, but it was merely contemptuous. She had believed him to be guilty, and she had married his betrayer. Well, she was a woman. Perhaps in killing her husband, he would also punish her; or perhaps she was, by this time, as false to Darrell as she had been to him. He cared nothing, either way.

Then there was Bob Dyver. Dear old Bob! He must contrive, with Mr. Gradwell's help, to write to him and let him know all that had occurred. Lastly there arose the more recent vision of a girlish figure in a neat black dress, and of large, pitying brown eyes which had told their own tale of sympathy with him in his great sufferings. Indeed, his very last thoughts were of Myra Gradwell ere he fell into a dreamless sleep.

A man who has gone through Morley Griffin's late experiences will sleep a great many hours, if undisturbed; and it was probably late in the

afternoon when he awoke, feeling considerably refreshed but so stiff that he could scarcely move. The huge lamp was still burning, and he made shift to trim it and to replenish it with oil; but he felt unequal to the task of preparing some tea. So he broke his fast with the contents of Myra's basket, applied fresh lotion to his ankle, and was glad to lie down again in expectation of a visit from Mr. Gradwell. He satisfied himself that the ribs, which he had supposed broken, were merely badly bruised, as indeed was his whole body from head to foot. More than ever he realized how utterly hopeless would have been his condition had he not so providentially fallen across this haven of refuge; and heartfelt indeed were his thanks to his law-breaking benefactor, as he lay coiled up in his blankets. He killed the time, as best he could, reading, smoking, eating, and drinking a well-diluted mixture of his host's potent spirit. After his prison life, the mere fact of having absolutely nothing to do was in itself a newly found source of happiness.

In point of fact, Mr. Gradwell did not make his appearance until the evening of the following day. He brought with him a plentiful supply of provisions, and informed Morley that, as he had foreseen, a search-party of warders had visited the cottage, some of whom had hung about the neighborhood, off and on, ever since. They were very eager to recapture the prison-

ers, whose escape they regarded as a disgrace to the whole staff, and had offered him a large reward should he be able to send a hint to the prison as to their whereabouts. Not until he had seen the last of them well away had he deemed it prudent to venture near the cave.

“You see,” he added, “Dene Hollow is one of the likeliest places an escaped prisoner would make for; and it used to be rather famous in the olden days as a haunt for outlaws. However, so far they suspect nothing, though it’s likely enough they’ll watch the neighborhood for a week or so to come. How’s the foot? Better? That’s a good hearing. I’ve brought you some fresh bandages and a bottle of Eliman. You must move about as little as possible; I’ll arrange all you require, within reach.”

And thereupon this big-hearted contrabandist proceeded to explain how his guest was to manage the hot-water lamp, where he could lay his hands upon various articles; and, lastly, he gave him a watch.

“Now,” he concluded, “I’ll just have one pipe with you, and a glass of grog. I don’t care to be away from the cottage very long, in case of accidents.”

After a half-an-hour’s cheerful conversation, and having promised to dispatch Morley’s letter to Bob Dyver, he rose to depart.

“You may expect me,” he said, “at about

five o'clock to-morrow ; but if anything occurs to prevent my coming, I'll send Myra. Keep your spirits up !”

“ And this man,” thought Morley, “ is what the Law would call a criminal, because he gains his livelihood at the expense of the Excise. Were he a law-abiding citizen, no doubt he would have betrayed me to my pursuers, and have profited by the blood-money offered for my recapture. It is lucky for me he isn't !”

Rest and Eliman did wonders. At the end of four days Morley informed his host, who had found opportunity to visit him each day, that he felt well enough for the road.

“ Well, that's good news,” replied Gradwell, “ and I daresay you are pretty well tired of existence down here. But the hue-and-cry is hotter than ever just at present, and you'd scarcely stand the ghost of a chance of getting away. Isolated as my place is, I don't hear much of what is going on ; but this morning I had another visit from a party of police and warders. It seems the whole country-side is in a state of ferment. What sort of a man is the the other prisoner who escaped ?”

“ About the lowest type of an incarnate brute that ever cheated the gallows,” replied Morley. “ He is a giant in size and strength, and a perfect tiger in ferocity. He was known in the prison as ‘ The Wolf,’ and fully deserves the epithet.”

“Then no doubt the police are right,” exclaimed Gradwell; “and he has added at least two more murders to his record! Three days ago a cottage, about five miles from here, was broken into, a woman was murdered, and her child, aged five years, probably killed also, although its body has not been found. Yesterday, in quite a different locality, two lads returning home from school were pursued by a very big man, dressed in some sort of old sack, and yelling like a demon. They fled in different directions. One escaped, but the other has not since been heard of. Is your man mad?”

“No; at least, he was never so considered. But he is quite capable of committing murder without the excuse of insanity.”

“Very likely,” persisted Gradwell; “but these acts seem to be those of a madman. What motive could he have?”

A terrible suspicion flashed across Morley’s mind.

“Great God!” he cried. “If, after many days of exposure and starvation upon the moor, The Wolf’s reason has really given way, one ghastly explanation is possible! Listen.” And he narrated Number 916’s experiences amongst the shipwreck crew.

Both Morley and his host were men of what may justly be described as iron nerve; yet, when Morley had finished, they looked at each

other with horror-stricken eyes and blanched cheeks.

Gradwell sprang to his feet.

“This brute,” he cried, “by his own showing has been a cannibal, and boasts of it! He is now, I am convinced, a raving maniac, and a craving for human flesh is the one idea in his mind. He is at large in a wild district, where the habitations are few and far apart. He must be hunted down like a wild beast! Upon this point at least I am with the police; and what’s more, I’ll head a party myself. I have my own ideas of Duty, such as they are, and they speak pretty plainly here. With a couple of men, such as I can lay hands upon, and who, like myself, know every nook and cranny in the district, we’ll soon bring this human tiger to bay!”

“Would that I could accompany you!” answered Morley, who felt in a measure responsible for The Wolf’s escape, although, of course, he could not have foreseen its dire consequences. “But consider the danger of leaving your daughter unprotected in the cottage.”

“You’re right,” assented Gradwell regretfully. “I can’t leave her. . . . Yet stay. If The Wolf should attack the cottage—and what more likely, seeing how isolated it stands?—and succeed in overpowering me, Myra would be at his mercy. From your description of him, I would be no match for him if he took me

unawares and without a revolver in my hand, and I can't keep guard night and day. I tell you what it is, sir. Until The Wolf is caught or killed, the safest place for Myra and for old Janet will be down here in the cave."

"There is much force in what you say," assented Morley, "if your daughter can put up with such rough quarters."

"Trust her for that," was the reply. "Safety is more important than comfort, anyhow. My mind is quite made up on the matter. I'll bring her and Janet early to-morrow morning and leave them under your protection whilst I and my men are tracking down The Wolf. You see I trust you, sir, although you are an 'escaped convict!'"

Instinctively the two right hands met in a cordial grip.

"I don't suppose it's likely that The Wolf will stumble across this hiding-place," said Morley, quietly. "But, in any case, I think I can promise you that Miss Gradwell will be safe. I believe I am a little bit stronger even than The Wolf," he added, with a slight smile.

"Oh! I shall have no fear once Myra is down here," answered Gradwell. "Meanwhile I'll get back home. There's no telling where and when that murderous savage may turn up next." And, so saying, he hurried off to put his newly-formed plan into execution.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE WOLF.

TRUE to his word, Mr. Gradwell returned next morning, accompanied by Myra and the old circus-rider, and followed by two stalwart fellows bearing a liberal supply of bedding and provisions.

“These are two law-breakers like myself,” he explained, “but, like me, they have homes to defend, and mean to do it. I have an idea that The Wolf, as you call him, is skulking about a place some six miles from here, and that’s where we are going to look for him. It may be he has gone further afield, and if we find reason to think so, we shall follow him up. So, as likely as not, you won’t see me again for a couple of days. Good-bye, sir! I leave all that I have of most precious in this world in your care. Good-bye, Myra lass! Remember, you are now under Mr. Griffin’s charge, and that you must on no account venture out until I return. Ta, ta, old girl! Got your knitting all right? That’s the style. Don’t forget those woollen socks you promised me. Come along, my lads!”

Of course Myra and the old woman had Morley's late quarters, whilst he arranged a shake-down for himself in the larger cave. Myra evidently knew the place well. She explained to Morley that some empty casks in one corner concealed the entrance to a third cave, from which access could be gained to a ravine. In this cave were stored sacks of grain, used in the process of distilling, kegs of manufactured spirit, oil, and the various other necessary supplies.

They soon became very good friends, Morley taking a keen interest in the sayings and doings of his pretty companion, whilst she clearly regarded him with a Miranda-like wonder and admiration. As for old Janet, however valuable her presence might be as a guardian of the proprieties, she crouched by the lamp-stove, knitting and crooning to herself, and paying little or no heed to the young people.

Under such circumstances, it was scarcely to be wondered at if friendship quickly ripened into something near akin to a very much stronger feeling. Thrown together as they were, they got a clearer insight into each other's characters and tastes in a few hours than would have been possible, under ordinary conditions, in as many months. There chanced to be several poetical works amongst the books, and these, as read aloud by Morley,

added fuel to the fire. In plain English, they were going through that ancient but still popular process known as falling in love, at lightning speed.

I do not think that I have as yet described the young girl. Well, it is easily done—in outline; but there was a certain piquant charm of manner that was not shyness, although near akin to it, and an indefinable something of perfect innocence and thoroughness about her, which I can find no words to convey. To begin with, she was eighteen, tall, and willowy as a young ash-plant; a wealth of rich brown hair, which it seemed a shame to tie up in a coronet; dark brown eyes, fringed by unusually long lashes; complexion naturally fair, but tanned to a richer hue than one sees in Regent Street. I think the nose was just the least bit in the world *retroussé*, but certainly it had no just cause (unless it were jealousy) to turn away from the sweet little Cupid's-bow mouth. Oh, dear, dear! That little mouth! When Myra Gradwell sat with her lips parted, just enough to show a glimpse of her small pearly teeth, the temptation to kiss them was almost more than Morley could resist. Yet, so far, greatly to his credit, he *had* resisted it.

Myra's great delight was to make him tell her his story over and over again. Upon one of these occasions he referred somewhat bitterly to Hugh Darrell's marriage.

“Was she *very* beautiful when you knew her?” asked Myra, for whom everything connected with Ethel Conyers seemed to have an especial attraction.

“Yes,” replied Morley, “she was very—very beautiful.”

Myra gave a little sigh—of sympathy, doubtless, in Morley’s loss of this very beautiful creature.

“I think, now, that I only loved her for her beauty,” added Morley, thoughtfully, “for it all died in my heart when I learned that she had married my betrayer.”

Upon one point Myra was very firm indeed. She would not hear of any such thing as revenge upon Darrell; and she easily gathered from Morley’s manner, if not from his words, that he contemplated vengeance.

“No!” she exclaimed, her beautiful eyes kindling with a noble enthusiasm. “Such an idea is unworthy of you. *Now* you are a martyr; but if you seek merely to avenge yourself, you sink to the level of the bad man who wronged you. Leave him to Heaven and to his own guilty conscience. They will avenge you!”

And somehow, when *she* preached these words of forgiveness, much of the rankling bitterness seemed to die out of Morley’s heart.

Upon the second day after her father’s departure, Myra became very restless and anx-

ious ; and, at last, she insisted upon ascending the ladder and watching for his coming.

“It’s dead against orders,” said Morley, smiling ; “but, as you say, there can be no harm in your waiting at the man-hole, and, I daresay, a little fresh air will do you good.”

At the same time he resolved to keep her well within view ; and fortunate it was that he did so.

Once at the surface, the temptation to wander a short distance into the wood and gather a few ferns became too strong to resist. She had gone perhaps a hundred yards from the narrow opening, through the undergrowth, and was pulling at a tough fern, when a rustling sound startled her, and, looking up, she beheld a sight which momentarily paralyzed her with terror. Stealthily stealing towards her was a huge figure, clad in ragged sackcloth, and brandishing a heavy club. At once it flashed across her mind that this was The Wolf—the human monster whom her father had gone forth to slay or capture. Instinctively she rose to flee, but the sudden shock of fear had deprived her limbs of all power, and, with a moaning cry, she sank to the earth !

With a savage yell The Wolf sprang forward. She heard the cracking and rustling of the undergrowth, as he forced his way through to where she lay. She saw the fiendish eyes glaring within a few yards of her, and she closed

her own that she might not see the blow which should deprive her of life. Then—oh, wonder! There was the swift rush of feet past her head; a voice she had learned to love rang out loud and clear in the still air, “Back to the cave for your life!”—and she knew that a death-struggle was about to take place. Back? No! Weak girl though she was, she might aid her champion in the conflict. At least, she would share his fate; for, at that tremendous moment, she knew that she loved him—aye, more than life itself. And so it befel that she, Myra Gradwell, was witness of one of the most terrific struggles that ever yet took place between two men.

Morley’s first onrush nearly cost him his life. He had not noticed the club, and nothing but his trained quickness of eye saved him from the murderous blow which The Wolf aimed at his head. He replied by countering his adversary heavily in the ribs, and then he closed with him. Now, considering that The Wolf was the taller and heavier man, and was, besides, a noted wrestler, this was clearly dangerous policy. But Morley had in reality no alternative. The finest boxer in the world would stand but a poor chance against a powerful maniac armed with a club which, wrestling, he would be compelled to abandon.

One unlucky blow from that bludgeon would have sealed Myra’s fate. As Morley had fore-

seen, no sooner did the The Wolf feel his clasp than he dropped his weapon and, with a savage snarl, locked him in his long arms. Then, for fully ten minutes, they strained and tugged, but without any perceptible advantage on either side. Whatever their respective strengths may have been before, Morley realized that, with the added fury of madness, The Wolf was now at least able to hold his own. For, that he was mad, raving mad, was beyond doubt. He jibbered and howled incessantly, whilst, every now and then, he made savage bites at Morley's shoulder, tearing at the stout tweed as a terrier worries a rag. Twice Morley had to exert his utmost strength to avert a fall, and his injured ankle was again giving way under the strain. If that failed him, all was lost.

Myra looked on with clasped hands and horror-stricken eyes. To her it seemed that this huge savage must, in the end, gain the mastery. Yet how gallantly her hero held his own! Could she do nothing? Must she stand idly by and see him borne down to his doom inch by inch?

At that moment Morley caught sight of her deadly-pale face.

"For God's sake!" he cried. "Go back! I dare not let go of him whilst you are there!"

Myra understood, more by the tone than the words, that her presence interfered with some plan of her lover's.

“I am going!” she said; and oh! how weakly and faintly the words were uttered! She strove to walk some yards in the direction of the cave, but a deadly fascination riveted her eyes upon the swaying, struggling forms, and she again paused.

Believing her gone, Morley suddenly slipped from The Wolf's clasp, and, before the latter had divined his change of tactics, let him have right and left squarely in the face. With a yell of rage, the giant again essayed to close, but was met by a terrific upper-cut which nearly fractured his jaw. As a boxer, he was a mere child in Morley's hands, the blows raining in upon face and body until, streaming with blood, he turned as though to escape. He saw Myra, who was staring with amazement at the changed aspect of the conflict, and rushed straight at her. Morley's ankle had almost completely given way, and his heart fairly stood still as he realized the maniac's intention. He was barely two seconds behind The Wolf, but, in those two seconds, the latter had seized his victim and was snarling over her prostrate form.

Then came his doom. With grip of proven steel, Morley's left hand closed upon his throat, whilst his right hand came with such sledge-hammer force upon his face that the very bones could be heard to shatter. A gurgling cry came from the blood-and-foam covered mouth, but that deadly left hand never relaxed. The

hideous face was battered out of all human shape, but still that pitiless right hand descended. One of the brute's arms nerveless enough now, lay across Myra's breast. Morley jerked it fiercely aside, and then, with both hands, strangled his foe to the death, holding him thus until his black soul (if such monsters *have* souls) had surely departed. Then he dragged the body to a distance, threw it amongst the bracken, and returned to Myra.

He knelt down beside her and raised her head upon his arm, panting, rather than speaking, reassuring words to her. But the reaction was too much for the poor child. She gave him one long look—a look the full meaning of which he but half-divined at that moment—uttered a little cry, and fell back in a dead faint. What was to be done? After a moment's hesitation, he decided to return to the cave and secure such restoratives as he could lay hands upon; and he was just starting upon this mission, when the sound of voices broke upon his ear. Glancing around, he saw a large body of warders and police and, with them, Mr. Gradwell.

Before he could drop down again, he was himself seen and challenged. He had but a moment to decide what he should do; but that moment sufficed. Recent events had modified his predetermined resolve to fight for his liberty to the last; his common-sense told him that

his future [now showed a strong ray of hope. Therefore he stood quite still. An inspector advanced.

“ I say, my man,” he said, “ have you seen anything of a — why, what’s this? I say, Giles, isn’t this one of the two men? ” And as he spoke he covered Morley with his revolver.

“ By thunder, so it is ! ” exclaimed Giles, a warder. “ Number 754, by all that’s wonderful ! The other cannot be very far off, I expect. ”

“ No, ” said Morley, calmly, “ he’s quite close. You’ll find him amongst the bracken yonder. I surrender, ” he added to the Inspector.

At a signal from the latter, one of his men advanced and handcuffed the prisoner, who succeeded in catching Mr. Gradwell’s eye and signalled him not to recognize him. Then for the latter’s guidance, as he knelt beside his daughter, he addressed the Inspector again :

“ I got these clothes out of a cottage not very far from here. When I reached the spot where we are now standing I heard a scream and saw a young woman pursued by Number 916, or The Wolf as we used to call him. He appeared to be raving mad. Anyhow, to save the girl, I had to fight him, and the end of it was that I strangled him. ”

“ Then, Number 754, ” replied the Inspector, “ you have done a brave and noble thing, which will do you no harm, take my word for it. Did the girl see the fight? ”

“Yes, from start to finish. The Wolf got away from me after a bit, and seized hold of her. He was within a foot of her when I killed him. Then she fainted, just before you saw me.”

“She’s coming round all right now!” cried Mr. Gradwell, who had carefully listened to Morley’s explanation. “I’ll get her back to the cottage presently. As for you, my man, prisoner or no prisoner, I say that you have earned the undying gratitude not alone of the father of the girl, whose life you risked your own to save, but of every father in England. What! you don’t mean to say you’re going to keep him in irons, Inspector?”

The Inspector hesitated.

“I gave the order before I had heard what occurred,” he answered. “But I think that, under the circumstances, I may take his word not to escape.”

“That you may safely do,” said Morley, quietly, “the more so as my ankle has given way and I could not run ten yards to save my life.”

“You’ll find this will prove a good day’s work,” rejoined the Inspector, motioning to a subordinate to remove the handcuffs. “I am not Home Secretary, but I have known free pardons to be granted for less than this.”

Mr. Gradwell conversed in a low tone with Myra, who presently came forward and, though

still very pale and weak, thanked her deliverer before them all, but, of course, as an utter stranger. Her eyes, however, told Morley their own tale.

“I’ll get a monster petition in your favor signed by the whole country-side,” whispered Gradwell. “Smart idea of yours, not to know me. I’ll see you again up at the prison.”

And then he and Myra walked homewards, wondering what poor old Janet down in the cave would think of her temporary abandonment.

The Inspector and his men surveyed the corpse of The Wolf with mingled disgust and amazement.

“I could never have believed,” he remarked, gravely, “that any one man could so mutilate a giant like that with no other weapons than his hands. You must be a Hercules yourself.”

“Oh!” cried Warder Giles, “Number 754 is well-known. I always said he was a better man than the big Cornishman, though hang me if I thought he could make such pulp of him as *that!*”

There being a dozen men present, it was decided to make shift to carry The Wolf’s remains as far as Mr. Gradwell’s cottage, where some sort of a stretcher could be improvised. This was accordingly done; and ultimately the party reached the prison, Morley having also to be carried the greater part of the way.

Thus it came to pass that Number 754, despite his desperate vow, found himself once more under lock and key, but this time comfortably lodged in the infirmary, where he received a succession of visits, from the Governor and the Chaplain down to the senior Warder who had been in charge of the gang from which he escaped.

An inquest was held upon The Wolf, and a verdict of "Justifiable homicide," coupled with a strong rider in favor of prisoner Number 754, was unhesitatingly returned, upon Myra's evidence. The press, both in London, and the provinces, took the case up very warmly, and Morley Griffin had every reason to believe that a free pardon would shortly be granted to him.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## HUSBAND AND WIFE.

UPON the evening of the day of Morley Griffin's escape, she whom he had known as Ethel Conyers was alone in a private sitting-room in a fashionable West-End hotel, staring absently into the fire-place as though seeking to trace the future in the fantastic shapes assumed by the glowing embers. The presence of dessert and of but a single *couvert* upon the centre-table made it plain that she had dined alone; indeed, of late, her husband had frequently thus absented himself upon a plea of important engagements with business men of his acquaintance. Eight short months' possession of his idol had sufficed to change the ardent lover into the callous husband, and the young wife had realized the fact.

"Hugh is tired of me already," she said to herself, bitterly, "and scarcely seeks to disguise it! And I? Do I care for him more than when, without a spark of affection for him in my heart, I was talked over into marrying him for the sake of the position his wealth would confer? No! A thousand times, no! . . .

He told me he would make me love him, and he keeps his word by treating me with neglect. Love him? Would to Heaven I had never seen him, or that I might leave him, this very night, never to see him again!"

Presently Hugh Darrell entered the room, a cigar in his mouth (although he knew his wife disliked the pungent odor), and an unopened evening paper in his hand—something to fall back upon, apparently, should conversation languish.

"I got away early on purpose, Ethel," he said, in a politely apologetic tone, "thinking you might find it lonely here all by yourself. I hope they dined you all right? Why, you look as miserable as a stray dog upon a wet day! What is the matter?"

"I have been thinking," she replied, her eyes still fixed upon the embers. "That is all."

Hugh Darrell surveyed his young wife with his old cynical smile.

"Thinking?" he echoed. "That's very foolish. Women, and especially young women, should never think; it's out of their line altogether, and brings on wrinkles. And, pray, what particularly disagreeable form did your thoughts take?"

"I have been thinking," she answered, coldly, "that our marriage was a mistake, a terrible mistake, for us both."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Darrell, with

a harsh laugh. "That is a pleasant remark for a wife of eight months' standing to make to her husband!"

"Pleasant or not," was the quick retort, "you have already succeeded in teaching me that it is true."

"Heavens above!" rejoined Darrell, mockingly, apostrophizing the ceiling. "Was there ever yet such an unreasonable young woman? Because I am compelled now and then to dine at houses to which I do not care to take my wife, she discovers that she is a most ill-used creature, and that our marriage was a mistake! Well, perhaps it was; possibly you have merely anticipated me in the discovery. But, as the contract cannot very well be unmade just now, I fear we must both put up with the consequences for some time longer."

The girl-wife rose to her feet, her blue eyes flashing, and looking extremely beautiful in her scorn. In an instant Darrell had encircled her waist and had forced her down upon his knee.

"Do you know, *cara mia*," he said, his eyes lighting up with revived passion, "this stormy mood suits you to perfection? You are doubly charming when you show fight!" And holding her in his arms, despite her struggles, he rained hot kisses upon her lips. "You see I am not tired of you yet, my pretty bird," he added, "however you may feel towards me.

There! get to bed early to-night, or you'll be as white as a sheet to-morrow."

Ethel's slender figure shook with a storm of suppressed sobs as she quitted the room. She had come to dread her husband's embraces far more than his sneers; and he spared her neither. Yet what could she do? Was she not his plaything, his wife? And—most maddening reflection of all!—she had brought all this misery upon herself by selling herself to a man she had never cared for, at her mother's bidding! Truly her punishment had been swift and bitter.

A self-satisfied look was upon Darrell's face as he found himself some whisky, lit a fresh cigar, and settled down in an easy-chair to glance through his newspaper. He had never felt on better terms with himself. True he had latterly received no report from Jason, but that individual's previous reports had made it clear he was persecuting and goading Morley Griffin to the utmost. How neatly, too, he had blocked Dyver's plans for an escape! Yes, the scoundrel was certainly earning his money, and would, no doubt, contrive to earn the larger sum ere long! He even found subject for rejoicing in his wife's outburst. After all, although her beauty had not quite palled upon him yet, he was sure sooner or later to grow tired of such an empty-headed doll, and she had made it clear that she would gladly consent

to a separation on any terms. As for Lady Conyers, it would serve the mercenary old woman right to have her daughter thrown back on her hands again. But one matter had not turned out to his satisfaction. Griffin's lawyers had, so far, successfully resisted all efforts made by nurse Martha to enforce the penalty-clause of the Colonel's Will. But that, too, would doubtless come right in course of time. These and similar reflections passed through Darrell's brain as he scanned the columns of the newspaper. Suddenly his eye fell upon a paragraph which fairly made his heart stand still:—

“DESPERATE ESCAPE OF CONVICTS.—An escape of a singularly daring nature is reported to-day from Dartmoor. It seems that, profiting by a sudden and heavy mist, two prisoners employed in the quarry-gang made a dash for freedom, and have so far eluded recapture, although heavily fettered together by leg-irons. Parties of warders and police are scouring the district. The names of the escapees, who are said to be men of exceptional stature and strength, are Griffin and Bloggs. The former was serving a sentence of seven years for forgery, whilst the latter is a ‘lifer’ reprieved from the gallows.”

“Morley Griffin escaped!” gasped Darrell,

hurriedly gulping down some whisky, though his trembling hand could scarce raise the glass to his lips. "The one thing that I dreaded come to pass! . . . Griffin a free man, and the first use he will make of his liberty will be to hunt me out and kill me! I know it as well as though I already felt his deadly grip upon my throat. My only hope is to get away—to put the greatest possible distance of sea and land between us. And that means the abandonment of all my plans for the future. How could I exist as a fugitive in a strange land? . . . Yet stay! Griffin is at large, it is true, but the odds are great he'll be recaptured alive or dead. The report says that parties of warders and police are scouring the district: they cannot fail to overtake him, and then, if he shows fight (as he certainly will), they'll shoot him. Of course! What a fool I am to worry and frighten myself simply because Griffin has given his gaolers the slip for a few hours!"

Yet, despite these reassuring reflections, Hugh Darrell could find no peace, and sought fictitious confidence by repeated applications to the whisky-bottle. Usually an abstemious man, the fumes of the spirit, which he now so recklessly swallowed, presently mounted to his brain, and, for probably the first time in his life, he got drunk. His wife was sleeping when he at last staggered into her room, still carrying the newspaper in his left hand.

“Ethel!” he hiccoughed, shaking her roughly by the shoulder, “I have found something in the paper that will interest you. Your old lover, Morley Griffin, has made his escape. Are you not glad?”

Ethel stared in bewildered fashion at her husband. Changeable as were his moods, she had never seen him like this before. His eyes were swollen, his utterance thick and jerky, his breath tainted. She had never seen a drunken man before, but she knew that he was drunk now.

“Leave me!” she said, indignantly. “How dare you insult me by your presence in your present state? Leave me, I say!”

“Oh, I’m all right, you pretty little spitfire!” hiccoughed Darrell, reeling as he spoke. “Took a little too much whisky celebrating your old sweetheart’s escape . . . that’s all. . . . Leave you? Not I. . . . Never saw you look more charming, and your kisses will freshen me up. . . . Confound that mat!”

In staggering backwards, Darrell tripped over a thick, woolly mat, was powerless to recover his balance, and fell heavily to the floor, where he lay stunned and motionless.

When, late the following morning, he awoke from the drunken slumber that ensued and rose to his feet, he was alone in the room, and, from certain signs around, at once suspected that his wife had quitted the hotel. A short

note, addressed to him and lying upon the dressing-table, confirmed his suspicions:—

*“After your outrageous conduct last night,”* it ran, *“I have resolved to leave you. I am going to rejoin Mamma at Naples, and have taken my maid with me. We left you lying upon the floor, sleeping off the effects of your debauch, and told your man not to enter the room until you should ring.—E. D.”*

“So you’ve cleared out, my lady, have you?” he muttered. “Let me see. . . . eleven o’clock. . . . You’re half-way to Paris by this time, for I suppose you caught the early mail. Shall I start in pursuit? . . . Why should I? Better that I should have my hands clear at the present juncture—at all events until I learn that Griffin has been retaken or shot.” And, having thus decided, he rang for his valet.

“At what time did Mrs. Darrell leave the hotel, Simpson?” he inquired.

“Shortly after seven, sir,” was the reply.

“Very good,” said his master. “You will pack up my things and hold yourself in readiness for our departure to-day or to-morrow. Tell the people here to make out my account. Get me a brandy and soda and *The Times*.”

In the great journal Darrell found a more detailed account of the escape; but so far, it appeared that the two convicts had eluded

pursuit. That looked as though they had succeeded in getting away from the immediate neighborhood of Dartmoor at all events, and the dread that Morley Griffin might, after all, baffle the police and make his way up to London returned with full force. Very probably Dyver had been forewarned of the attempt about to be made and had found means to assist Griffin in his flight. In his feverish anxiety, Darrell sought out Jacob Aaronson and found the Jew in a state of nervous dread fully equal to his own.

"If Griffin should succeed in reaching London," said Darrell, in grave, emphatic tones, "and can lay hands upon either of us, there'll be murder done."

"Hush!" urged Aaronson, turning a sickly white, "don't talk of such things! Why should he seek to harm *me*? I only discounted a bill that you swore at the trial was a forgery, and gave my good money for his worthless paper. He can have nothing against *me*."

"It won't hold water, my prince of usurers!" retorted Darrell, with a dry, forced laugh. "Griffin saw through the whole plot when he found himself caught in the trap, and could gauge your share in the business to a nicety. Take my word for it, he would as soon fix those big fingers of his in your throat as in mine. We're in the same boat, Master Jacob, and the best thing we can do is to pull together."

“What can we do?” asked the Jew, eagerly.

“I know what *I* shall do,” was the reply, “and, if you’re wise, you’ll do the same. Keep out of the way for a few days, to see if the police will succeed in retaking him. If they *don’t*, then there’s nothing for it but to make a bolt for it, abroad, and obliterate our traces as best we may. And, by the way, you’ll have to provide the greater portion of the funds. I’ve been spending rather too freely for some time past and mine are at a low ebb.”

Aaronson groaned.

“How could I leave my business?” he wailed. “Every day that I am away would mean a loss to me of money and of clients, who would fall into other hands. *I can’t go!*”

“Money and clients are good enough in their way,” rejoined Darrell, grimly, “but life is better, and I repeat that if ever Griffin sets eyes upon you he’ll kill you.”

To work up the Jew’s fears to concert pitch was not a difficult matter, and, in the end, he agreed that, should Griffin evade capture much longer, flight offered the surest means of escaping his vengeance. But upon the question of providing the necessary funds, he proved less amenable to argument. He finally agreed, should flight become necessary, to advance Darrell £200 upon his note-of-hand, but beyond that he stubbornly refused to go.

“Mrs. Nesbit has plenty of money,” he

added. "You are her adopted son. She stands to make £16,000 out of Morley Griffin. Ask her to help you."

This Darrell had already decided in his own mind to do. His attack upon the Jew's purse-strings, through his fears, was merely a supplementary scheme.

"Of course I shall," he assented, "and I've no doubt she will do what she can, though I doubt if she has much ready-money at command."

"I tell you she has," persisted Aaronson, "and I know her affairs pretty well. The very nature of her business—lending upon jewelry and such like—compels her to keep large sums at hand, and she has title-deeds in her safe that I would lend £5,000 upon, myself."

"The deuce she has!" thought Darrell. "Then she has been playing a dark game with me; I fancied I had bled her drier than that amounts to.—Well," he added aloud, "I must try what I can do with her. You say you'll lend £5,000 upon her title-deeds?"

"Yes," replied Aaronson, with a cunning leer, "if she'll let you have them."

"We shall see," rejoined Darrell curtly.

And he thereupon returned to his hotel to plan out his immediate movements. He presently made up his mind and, the evening papers containing no further news of the escapees, paid his bill and ordered his servant to be at Charing

Cross station with the luggage at 10 P. M., saying no word as to their destination. He had decided to await the issue of events at Dover, and there, in a quiet hotel a little way out of the town, he accordingly took up his quarters under his former pseudonym of Barrett.

“This is a rum start,” soliloquized the valet. “I wonder what little game the master’s up to now? I’d wager a quarter’s wages there’s another petticoat at the bottom of it!”

CHAPTER XV.

THE MEASURE OF INIQUITY IS FILLED.

As day succeeded day and still no news was published of the recapture of the escaped convicts, Hugh Darrell's anxiety grew to be well-nigh intolerable, and, in sheer desperation, he fell back upon the whisky-bottle to sustain his sinking courage. Day and night the uppermost thought in his mind was that Morley Griffin was assuredly upon his track, and might at any moment run him to earth. He corresponded with Aaronson, who was lying *perdu* in a northern London suburb, but the two partners in iniquity had little to write to each other of a consolatory nature. At length came the news of Morley Griffin's surrender to the search-party, after his fearful encounter with The Wolf. The entire Press rang with the exploit, and the opinion seemed to be unanimous that it merited substantial recognition at the hands of the Home Secretary; indeed, a Free Pardon was spoken of as a foregone conclusion.

Then, indeed, Darrell realized that, to use his own phrase, "the game was up." If Griffin was a foe to be dreaded whilst still a hunted

outlaw, how much more formidable would he not be as a free man? He was not the sort of antagonist to postpone the settlement of his terrible score, and Darrell knew that the day of reckoning must now be close at hand. Some little delay there might be ere the Free Pardon would be actually granted; but, with the strong influence that would be brought to bear by Dyver's numerous friends, this delay would probably be of the briefest.

Hesitation formed no part of Darrell's character. He straightway resolved to return to London, raise what money he could by any and all means in his power, and sail from some foreign port for the United States. The presence of Simpson would henceforth be an incumbrance. He commenced, therefore, by paying him off and discharging him, with an excellent character, upon a plea of an urgent summons to Italy. He then took train to London, leaving the bulk of his luggage at Dover.

His first visit was to the hotel, at which he and his wife had stayed, for such letters as might have arrived during his absence.

"A young foreigner was here inquiring for you yesterday, sir," the hall-porter told him. "Couldn't speak a word of English, but had your name written on a card. So I sent for one of the waiters, who is an Italian. He told me the foreigner was an Italian also—a Neapolitan, by his accent,—but, beyond the fact that

he wished to see you upon very important business, he was very uncommunicative."

"A Neapolitan to see me?" said Darrell, musingly. "I wonder what about? Oh, I think I know! Mrs. Darrell has joined her mother, Lady Conyers, at Naples, and this young man was probably sent by them. Ask him to call at this address, should he return, will you?"

"Certainly, sir," was the reply. "Thank you, sir."

"No letter from Ethel or her mother," muttered Darrell, as he hailed a hansom and bade the man drive to an obscure street in Camden Town where Aaronson had sought refuge. "I suppose this mysterious foreigner is the bearer of some sort of ultimatum from the old woman. Rather a sell for her to have the girl thrown back on her hands; but, as Ethel bolted of her own accord, she can't blame me. Let them settle it between themselves when I'm gone."

He found Aaronson (or Mr. Moss, as he temporarily called himself) at home, and at once came to the point.

"The game's up, Aaronson," he said, in short, decided tones, "and the sooner we're off the better. I hear Griffin will receive a Free Pardon in a day or so."

This was pure invention, but it produced the desired effect upon the frightened Jew.

"Holy Moses!" he gasped. "So soon as

that? The newspapers merely speak of it as a probability, in course of time——”

“It’s a certainty, I tell you,” interrupted Darrell, “and the man has influential friends, who can do what they please with the Home Office. Morley Griffin will be in London, a free man, within forty-eight hours.”

Aaronson shuffled about the room in an agony of agitation.

“I can’t transfer my business, in so short a time, without heavy loss,” he groaned. “I shall be a ruined man if I go away.”

“You know best about that,” retorted Darrell, with a sneer. “But you’ll most certainly be a dead man if you stay.”

“I might get a friend to see Mr. Griffin,” urged the Jew. “He owes me money. I will freely forgive the debt and pay him more besides. He will need money, and surely he can be squared!”

“Squared!” echoed Darrell, scornfully. “With what do you fancy you can square a man who has suffered two years’ penal servitude through your treachery? You don’t know Morley Griffin, Aaronson. I tell you that all the gold in the Bank of England would not square him, as you call it. Our only hope of safety is to get clear away before he is liberated, and our time is very short. Of course you are amply provided with funds. But, as I told you, I am not, and will thank you to cash this note-

of-hand for £200, as you promised. That, with what I may succeed in getting from Martha Nesbitt, may suffice to see me through."

With manifest reluctance, Aaronson gave Darrell a cheque for £175 in exchange for the note, deducting £25 for three months' interest.

"And now," said Darrell, "let us understand each other's movements. I shall see Martha to-night, and shall call here to-morrow morning to let you know the result."

"Try and get her to lend you those title-deeds," urged the Jew, eagerly.

"I'll do my best," was the reply. "Make your own arrangements so as to be ready to leave to-morrow evening for Dover with me."

To this Aaronson, with much lamenting, agreed; and Darrell departed to cash his cheque and to telegraph to nurse Martha that he would visit her at nine o'clock. Having executed these operations, he bent his steps towards his former bachelor quarters, and left a note penciled in Italian for the Neapolitan messenger.

*"I shall be here to-morrow,"* it ran, *"at twelve or one o'clock.—H. D."*

Darrell arrived at Laburnum Cottage rather before than behind time, and nurse Martha received him as usual with open arms. Scoundrel though he was and utterly void of principle

though she knew him to be, he was all-in-all to the lonely old woman, who, moreover, as you know, was herself not troubled with scruples where money was to be gained or a vengeful scheme furthered. She had not seen Hugh for nearly a month, and was startled by his altered, haggard appearance. She saw, too, unmistakable signs that he had been drinking; and, indeed, almost the first words he spoke were a request for whisky.

“I don’t like to see that, Master Hugh,” she said, gravely, as he helped himself largely to the spirit. “It’s not like you to dull your keen wits with drink.”

“Bah!” ejaculated Darrell, impatiently. “What’s the use of keen wits when the game is lost? I tell you, Martha, that, but for drink, I couldn’t have stood the strain since Griffin made his escape. Can’t you imagine what the feeling that you are being *hunted down* is like? Do you suppose I can forget the look of undying vengeance in his eyes, when he hurled himself upon me in the Court, and the grip of his fingers upon my throat?”

“I had thought you made of sterner stuff,” answered the old woman, with a shade of contempt in her tone, “than to frighten yourself with shadows. Even supposing Morley Griffin had succeeded in reaching London, how long do you suppose he would have eluded the Scotland Yard detectives—conspicuous as he is

from his unusual stature? You were not compelled to remain in the Metropolis, and how could a hunted outlaw like he hope to follow your trail? Besides, could you not carry a revolver and shoot him at sight if, by any chance, you *did* meet? Your fears got the better of your common-sense, Master Hugh, and you made matters worse by ruining your nerves with drink."

No man likes to be told that he has been a coward and a fool; and Hugh Darrell glared at Mrs. Nesbitt viciously. Yet against her cool, dispassionate statement of the case he had nothing to urge. His guilty conscience had, in very sooth, made an arrant coward of him, and he knew it.

"It's easy enough for you to talk like that," he rejoined sullenly. "Your skin was in no danger. I had to think of myself. Anyhow, even you will admit that, as Morley Griffin is about to receive a Free Pardon, England is no place for me to remain in."

"If you have frightened yourself into believing that the first use he will make of his freedom will be to qualify for the gallows by taking your life," said Mrs. Nesbitt, quietly, "then I suppose you had better go abroad for a time. I do not need your help to fight out the penalty-clause in the Will; and I'm not afraid of this slayer of cannibals, I assure you."

"Fight the Will?" echoed Darrell. "You

must be mad! The Free Pardon revokes the sentence of Penal Servitude."

"Nothing of the sort," replied Mrs. Nesbitt. "He is about to be released as an act of grace for saving a girl's life at the risk of his own. The original conviction still stands on record against him, and disqualifies him under his uncle's Will. His lawyers may cause delays, but I *must* win in the end. That part of the scheme holds good still, at all events. You have already robbed him of the doll-faced girl he wished to marry. He has served two years of his sentence, and, as I understood from you, under circumstances of exceptional severity. But for your absurd personal dread of the man, I cannot see that you have any cause to complain that the game has been lost, as you did just now."

Despite the irritating, dominant accent of thinly-veiled contempt in the old nurse's voice, Darrell found comfort in her words.

"Yes," he assented savagely, and again applying himself to the bottle; "as you say, nothing can ever undo the degradation of the sentence, nor the two years of misery he has undergone. And I've had an eight months' leave of his pretty popinjay. . . . Ha! ha! . . . Nothing can ever undo that fact either. . . . Ha! ha! . . . It was pleasant enough whilst it lasted. . . ."

"What do you mean, Master Hugh?" asked

Mrs. Nesbitt. "Have you and your wife quarrelled already?"

"Just so," assented Darrell, nodding his head with tipsy emphasis. "She bolted more than a week ago, and has returned to her mother at Naples."

"That marriage was a blunder," remarked the nurse, "especially as you allowed the girl's money to be tied up and settled upon herself."

"So it was, Nurse," said Darrell, "from a business point of view. But I wanted her,—partly to spite Griffin, and partly because she struck my fancy more than any girl I ever knew. But psha! after all, women are very much alike, and I was getting tired of her. Won't the old lady be wild? She has sent over a special messenger to hunt me up already. . . . Deuced good whiskey this, Martha. Where do you get it?"

"Don't take any more, Master Hugh," pleaded Mrs. Nesbitt. "Try and eat a bit of supper."

Darrell consented to the supper, but immediately afterwards reverted to the whisky, and broached the topic uppermost in his mind.

"You agreed with me, Nurse," he began, "that it will be better for me to go abroad for a time."

"I said, *if* you cannot conquer your unreasonable dread of Morley Griffin," corrected Mrs. Nesbitt, drily.

“Well, I can’t, and that’s the fact,” pursued Darrell. “So we will start upon the assumption that I *am* going abroad.”

The old woman pursed her lips, foreseeing what was to follow.

“The question is,” he went on, speaking slowly and thickly, “what am I to live upon when I get there? I have no money—or next to none.”

“Then you must have been spending at a ruinous rate!” exclaimed Mrs. Nesbitt, angrily. “And I’ll tell you candidly, Master Hugh, that I cannot afford to help you much further. Even as it is, I am hard pushed for capital to carry on my business; and the expenses of that Will case have been heavy. When I win that, I shall be in a position to assist you to make a fresh start; but, until then, I can do but little. I never can make you out. Over and over again I have helped you, and you always appeared to make good use of my help, and to earn or win large sums of money. Yet you as invariably break down at intervals, and come to me for fresh supplies. I have never complained, because you are the only living being I love. But the plain English of the matter is that whereas, but for these continual drains of yours, I should now be a fairly rich woman, I am in reality not worth £10,000—a sum you could easily dissipate in a couple of years.”

**The Measure of Iniquity is Filled.** 187

“Not I!” interrupted Darrell, eagerly.  
“With half that sum in hand, I see my way to making a huge fortune.”

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE VENDETTA.

ONWARD through the cold, wet October night stumbled Hugh Darrell, he knew not how, he scarce knew whither, until he reached the Borough. Then, like some hunted and exhausted wild beast, he cast around for some asylum wherein he might secure shelter and warmth. The exertion of his rapid flight had almost sobered him, and, now that the first shock of horror was past, he began vaguely to realize the terrible position in which he stood. He could not yet clearly remember all the events of the night, but he knew that he had committed murder and that the penalty of murder is death at the hangman's hands. He must strive to think, to recall exactly what had happened; and then he would be able to devise some plan whereby he might save himself. But, first of all, he must have rest, and warmth, and something to allay the burning in his throat. He looked at his watch by the light of a street lamp. It was ten minutes to three. Hard-by, two huge wagons, laden apparently with market-produce, were drawn up outside

some sort of night coffee-house,—on their way doubtless to Covent Garden. After hesitating a little, he entered the place.

Half-a-dozen men of bucolic appearance were seated at a long, dirty table, drinking coffee and eating. They looked curiously at the wet, mud-bespattered, but withal well-dressed newcomer, set him down probably as some belated “swell,” and went on with their meal. Darrell ordered some coffee also (as there appeared to be nothing else to drink), and sat down at a corner remote from the others. The warmth of the room and the coffee revived him; his thoughts began to piece themselves together more intelligibly. He had a second cup, and yet a third, maturing his plans the while; and then he decided what he should do.

“It is no use my running my neck into a noose, because I unluckily choked the old woman a little too long,” he muttered to himself. “And as for her being my mother, I simply don’t and won’t believe it. How was I to guess it, anyhow, even if she were? . . . A nice mother, indeed! Fobbing me off with a beggarly £30 a month! . . . What a fatal blunder I committed in deserting the cottage after the—the accident! That infernal whisky must have driven me crazy. . . . I ought to have made it appear (an easy job enough) as though burglars had broken in, and then have gone quietly to bed again. . . . Too late now.

. . . I couldn't get in without arousing deaf-old Judith, and, even then, her suspicions would be excited. . . . What if I go back and . . . *silence* her suspicions and her evidence? A bold policy is often the best. . . . No! I daren't risk it. The alarm may already be given, and I should be walking into the hangman's hands. . . . I'll go to Aaronson and tell him what has happened. He dare not betray me, and will help me to disguise myself and slip out of the country. . . . Yes, that is my best plan."

Darrell paid for his coffee, pulled his hat well down over his eyes, and walked on towards London Bridge, where he hoped to find a cab. He did so, and drove to Ludgate Hill. There he dismissed the vehicle, and presently took another. He thus changed his drivers half-a-dozen times, and, taking circuitous routes, was finally deposited, within half-a-mile of Aaronson's house, at six o'clock.

The Camden Town folk are early risers, and a girl was sweeping the door-step when Darrell reached his destination. She recognized him as a previous visitor of Mr. "Moss," and, rewarded with a shilling, allowed Darrell to make his way to that lodger's rooms, where, in response to a vigorous summons, the Jew presently made his appearance clad in an extremely dirty old dressing-gown. Darrell pushed him into the sitting-room, followed him, and locked the door.

"Sit down," he said. "Listen to me attentively, and, above all, don't raise your voice." And then he narrated what had occurred, harping somewhat upon the accidental nature of the old woman's death, and suppressing the fact of his relationship to her. As *he* told the story, it did not sound particularly atrocious. But the fact remained that, accidentally or not, he had killed Martha Nesbitt, and the Jew turned livid with fear.

"It's murder!" he croaked, in a hoarse whisper, "Say what you will, Mr. Darrell, it's murder in the eyes of the Law, and now you come here to make me an accessory after the fact! Why tell me anything about it? Why force me to choose between being your accomplice or giving you away?"

"Because I need your assistance," answered Darrell, coolly, "and because you dare not 'give me away.' Listen, Aaronson. As I told you before, you and I are in the same boat, and, if I go down, I shall drag you down with me. You might, it is true, go straight to a police-station and betray me. That would mean the rope for me to a dead certainty; the case is absolutely clear against me. But what would it mean for you? Think a moment. Who edged me on to the commission of the crime by telling me of £5,000 worth of title-deeds in the safe, and who offered to buy them? You!"

“Yes,” panted the Jew, “I said I would advance £5,000 if you could persuade Mrs. Nesbitt to part with them.”

“Persuade!” echoed Darrell, mockingly. “And what construction, think you, would a jury place upon the word ‘persuade’ coming from *your* mouth? But, apart from this, how would you get away from the *proofs*, which I could and would supply, that you financed the conspiracy that sent Morley Griffin, an innocent man, to seven years’ Penal Servitude? That would mean ten or fifteen years, my poor Jacob, even if you escaped hanging for the other affair!”

Aaronson groaned aloud. It was even as Darrell said. Against the charge of conspiracy, supported by proofs, no defence would be possible.

“Now,” continued Darrell, noting the impression his words had produced, “I’ll act squarely by you, if you do the same by me. Help me to secure a good disguise (you must know dozens of your tribe in that line of business) and to get abroad, and my lips are sealed for ever about the Griffin affair.”

“But suppose you are caught in spite of the disguise?” urged the Jew, tremulously.

“That will be no fault of yours, if you do your best,” answered Darrell. “I should still feel grateful, instead of vindictive, towards you, and could have no earthly purpose to serve in

sacrificing you to my mortal enemy, Morley Griffin. Can't you see that for yourself?"

Well knowing Darrell's bitter hatred of Griffin, Aaronson felt tolerably sure the former meant what he said; and he finally consented to supply him with all that he needed in the way of disguise.

"Then you had better lose no time about it," rejoined Darrell. "The police are bound to be on the move within an hour or two, even if that confounded old hag, Judith, has not given the alarm already. I shall try and get across to Jersey to-night from Weymouth,—they'll hardly think of looking for me there. Get me some lotion that will color my skin a dark brown, some black dye for my hair, and a well-made black beard with moustaches. For clothes I shall need a baggy, old serge suit, a broad-brimmed soft hat, flannel shirt, blue muffler, canvas shoes, and an old reefing-jacket. Stuff a few shirts and other things of the sort into a well-worn carpet-bag. I shall wait here till you come back. By the way, leave me some cigars and whisky. I find I can't knock off the accursed stuff all at once. I'll pay for everything when you return."

Comforting himself with the reflection that the sooner he complied with his unwelcome guest's instructions, the more quickly he would get him off his hands, Aaronson hastily swallowed a meagre breakfast and started citywards.

He had no difficulty in procuring the various articles enumerated by Darrell, though he was careful to buy them at a number of different shops, and, as it was still early, bethought him of paying a flying-visit to his own office to see how matters were progressing in his absence. He found his clerk, Isaac, vainly endeavoring to understand, or to make himself understood by, a black-eyed young foreigner of Italian appearance.

“I can’t make out what he says at all, sir,” explained Isaac. “He came here just now with a note from the landlord at Mr. Darrell’s old rooms asking us to give Bearer that gentleman’s address, as he is unable to call there this afternoon. I told him I didn’t know Mr. Darrell’s whereabouts, but he can’t understand me, and he won’t go away.”

Mr. Aaronson’s knowledge of Italian was very limited, but he contrived to make the visitor understand that, if he had any letter or message for Mr. Darrell, he would undertake to deliver it. Whereat the Italian waxed very angry, shook his head impatiently several times, and departed, scowling fiercely at them both.

“The Hon. Mr. Dyver has called twice to see you,” remarked Isaac. “He refused to state the nature of his business, but bade me let you know that it concerned Mr. Morley Griffin and your own best interests.”

The Jew’s alarms for his personal safety at

once revived. Perhaps Mr. Dyver, aware of his friend's murderous intentions, sought to save him from the consequences of his own vindictiveness by putting his intended victim on his guard. Was it not even possible that the gentleman was empowered to come to terms?

"Isaac," he said, eagerly, "you must seek out Mr. Dyver and tell him that, if he will give his word of honor to come alone, I will meet him here to-morrow at three o'clock. Telegraph me his reply, but on no account give my address to *any one*, you understand?"

"Very well, sir. I'll find him, never fear," replied the clerk, marvelling somewhat at all this mystery.

Aaronson then returned to the cab, which had awaited him, and drove to Camden Town, little dreaming that the young Italian, in a second hansom, was close behind him all the way. When the Jew reached his temporary abode, this second cab passed swiftly by; but a pair of bright, black eyes had unerringly noted the number of the house, and, at the next corner, the owner of the black eyes discharged his driver.

"He is *there*, this Ugo Darrell!" he muttered. "What is he, a fine gentleman, hiding in this quarter for? Can he suspect who the foreigner is who wished to see him? Anyhow, I can deal with him better here, the infamous *traditore!* He had no intention of seeing me

to-day, as his note said. Not he! That was merely to gain time. But I shall watch that house until he leaves it, if I have to stand about here all day."

Aaronson ordered some lunch for both; and, when that was disposed of, Darrell set about perfecting his disguise. Speaking French remarkably well, he had decided to pass himself off as Isidore Dupré, native of Mauritius, an island he had twice visited and knew well.

He had ample time before him, and spared no pains to make the metamorphosis complete. His heavy tawny moustache first disappeared. Next, with Aaronson's help, he applied the brown lotion freely and carefully to the whole of his body, until he was of a genuine creole color. His brown hair was next transformed into jet black, as were also his eyebrows. Blue eyes are not infrequently seen amongst creoles, and he moreover practised a habit of keeping them half-closed, which rendered them inconspicuous,—disdaining colored glasses as tending to excite observation. He then put on the loose, misfitting, old suit and a still older reefing-jacket,—which, with the addition of muffler, beard, and soft hat, completed the disguise.

"You'll do!" exclaimed Aaronson, confidently, when the last finishing touches had been added. "No one living would recognize you. I couldn't have believed it possible!"

"Yes," assented Darrell, scanning himself

critically, "I think Monsieur Isidore Dupré will pass muster. I don't feel nervous about the result, anyhow."

Darkness soon sets in at the end of October, and, as though to favor his chances, a thick mist had fallen. Darrell decided upon catching the 5 P. M. Express from Waterloo, and, preceded by Aaronson to make sure that his exit would not be noticed, seized his carpet-bag and sallied forth, shortly after four o'clock, in search of a cab.

The Italian had meanwhile remained unflinchingly at his post. When Aaronson emerged, shortly afterwards followed by a strangely-attired man carrying a bag, he walked swiftly by them to get a view of their faces as they passed a street-lamp, whilst he himself crouched in the shadow of a doorway. Aaronson he recognized, but who was his companion? He was utterly unlike the Senor Ugo Darrell, whom he had often seen at Naples, and looked like a Spaniard or a Mexican. Could it be that he had disguised himself? He followed them stealthily, resolving to get a nearer view by the glare of a public-house at the corner. There, there chanced to be a disengaged cab, which Darrell promptly secured; and, as he looked up at the driver to give his order, "Waterloo Station," the Italian got a fair view of his steely, blue eyes, and instantly recognized him as the man he sought.

Aaronson at once retraced his steps, the cab drove off, and the Italian started in pursuit on foot. For nearly a mile he ran at his best pace (for the horse was a good one), until his breath came in gasps and his heart thumped against his ribs. Yet if he paused to hail another cab, he knew that the one he was following would at once be lost in the mist; and so, breathless, well-nigh spent, he raced onwards. Just as he was upon the point of falling, through sheer exhaustion, the cab suddenly stopped: a 'bus-horse had fallen and caused a block in the traffic. Quick to profit by this delay, the Italian placed five shillings in the hands of another cabman and intimated by signs that he was to keep close behind Darrell's. The driver nodded, in token that he understood, and both vehicles were soon under way again.

At Waterloo, Darrell jumped out, paid his fare, and hurried to the booking-office; the Italian followed close upon his heels, and listening keenly to catch his destination.

"*Veymouth*, tird single," said Darrell, in a well-imitated foreign accent.

These words his pursuer kept on repeating to himself until his turn arrived. "*Veymouth*, tird single," he also demanded, and received his ticket. He now felt easy in his mind. Darrell was certainly going to "*Veymouth*," and so was he. Very well; they would travel in the same carriage. He soon discovered Darrell's

compartment, and secured a seat himself in an opposite corner. Ere the train started three more passengers got in, and soon began discussing the "Clapham Murder," with accounts of which all the evening papers were full.

"It's a clear case against this Darrell," remarked one. "The old servant's evidence is conclusive."

"Yes," assented another. "And they say a letter was found proving that the murdered woman was his own mother!"

"Horrible!" added the third newcomer. "It is some comfort to think that the police have a strong clue to the monster's whereabouts."

"Tickets, gentlemen, please," said a keen-eyed inspector, entering the compartment, bull's eye lantern in hand. The scrutiny was satisfactory, and he withdrew.

"Do you know who that was?" asked passenger No. 1, eagerly.

"No!" replied the others. "Who was it?"

"Sam Sharpett of Scotland Yard! I know him quite well by sight; often see him. I'll wager there's a detective watching every train that will leave London until they collar that fellow Darrell. Cute idea, dressing up as a ticket-inspector, ain't it?"

"Very," assented his companions, as the train moved out of the station.

"Cuter than the man himself," thought Darrell. "Come! If I can pass muster with a

Scotland Yard detective, who is on the look-out for me, I have nothing to fear. . . . That Italian-looking fellow over in the corner is eyeing me rather queerly. Where have I seen some one something like him before? Can't fix him in my memory. Fancy, I daresay. . . . I'm dog-tired. . . . The money is all right, next my skin. . . . I'll sleep out this journey. . . . Let me see, Jersey tomorrow. Then across to St. Malo. From there to Havre, and then a French steamer to New York. That's the programme.

One by one the three passengers left the train during the long journey, until at length the Italian was alone with the sleeping man in the compartment.

"*Diavolo!*" muttered the former. "If I were but quite certain he is the man, how quickly would my poor Teresa be avenged! . . . I am almost sure 'tis he; but I must make *quite* sure before I strike! . . . This train stops seldom. I have time for my purpose."

He drew a length of thick, strong cord from his pocket, made a running-noose, and into this he cautiously passed both his intended victim's hands. Then with a swift jerk he tightened the noose, rapidly wound the remainder of the cord round both wrists, and securely knotted the whole ere Darrell was fairly awake.

“A single cry,” hissed his captor in his ear, producing a poniard as he spoke, “and I shall bury this in your heart.”

“What would you do, man?” gasped Darrell, in such Italian as he could muster. “Rob me?”

“No, Señor Ugo Darrell,” answered the Italian, keenly watching the other’s face, as the name slowly fell from his lips; “I am not a *ladrone*.”

“Then you would betray me to the police!” exclaimed Darrell, fully convinced that his disguise had been penetrated. “But see! I will pay you well to hold your tongue, whoever you are!”

“Then you *are* Ugo Darrell,” was the reply, “and I was right. Now shall I tell you who I am? I am Marco Gaoli, the betrothed lover of Teresa Varoni whom you outraged in the woods, and drove to suicide in the lake, at Mori!”

“As God is my judge,” protested Darrell, desperately, “this is the first I have heard of her death!”

“Perhaps so,” rejoined Marco Gaoli, grimly; “for did you not almost immediately afterwards marry your English love and go away? What recked you of the fate of the little *contadina* you had ruined? But it all came out later on—the priest himself cursed you from the altar. And I swore that so soon as I could

scrape together the means, with help from Teresa's father, I would hunt you down and kill you! I have hunted you down, and now say a prayer, if (heretic *traditore* that you are!) you know one, for you are about to die!"

With the desperation begotten of despair, Hugh Darrell made a frantic effort to burst his bonds. The Italian's left hand choked the shriek that he tried to utter, and then, thrice in swift succession, the murderous steel was plunged into his breast. . .

When the train reached Weymouth the officials were horrified to discover, in a third-class compartment, the body of a poorly-dressed, dark-skinned foreigner, in whose heart the blade of a dagger still remained. To the handle of the same weapon was attached a slip of paper bearing this legend, badly written in pencil:

*"La vendetta del padre i del promesso sposo di Teresa Varoni sul traditore Ugo Darrell.—M. G."*

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE HON. BOB BESTIRS HIMSELF.

THE Hon. Robert Dyver and his friend, Captain Heavysides, chanced to be at Monaco when Morley Griffin effected his escape, and their first intimation of the event came through a paragraph in a belated English newspaper.

“Hurrah, Dick!” cried Dyver, greatly excited by the news. “Poor old Morley has given them the slip at last. Read this paragraph!”

Heavysides eagerly scanned the lines.

“Splendidly done, by Jove!” he exclaimed. “But I say, Bob, it’s long odds against his evading recapture, you know. What a pity we weren’t about to give him a helping hand, as we tried to before.”

“Can’t be helped!” rejoined his friend. “At least we can hasten back and see if we can’t help him now. The first thing the poor boy will do will be to communicate with one of us at the club. I’d wager there’s a letter or message of some sort awaiting us there now—that is, if he hasn’t meanwhile been retaken.

We're off home, Dick, by the first train. Walters! pack up, like greased lightning!"

"I'm with you, of course, Dick," assented the dragoon. And, within an hour, they were *en route*, anathematizing the slowness of Continental expresses.

The Hon. Bob's prediction was fulfilled. At the club he found Morley's letter, which Gradwell had posted, awaiting him.

"I say, Dick, read that!" exclaimed Dyver. "Why, what's the matter with you?"

He might well ask; for the big dragoon, usually as quiet in his movements as befitted a man of his *avoirdufois*, was executing an elephantine *pas-seul*, within the sedate precincts of the club smoking-room, and waving an *Evening Standard* triumphantly over his head.

"Read what?" he answered, breathlessly, "Just you read *this*, Bob! And when you've read it, we'll paste it up for all the other fellows to read."

Amazed at his extraordinary behavior, a small group of members gathered laughingly round the speaker.

"Read it out loud, Bob!" he insisted. And thus adjured, Dyver gave voice to a thrilling description of Morley Griffin's encounter with The Wolf.

"Bravo!" . . . "Well done!" . . . "Bravo, Morley!" resounded on all sides; for Griffin had been a general favorite.

“That means a Free Pardon, sure enough!” remarked one member who, upon the strength of having eaten a great many Inner Temple dinners twenty years ago, claimed to be something of a legal authority.

“A Free Pardon, indeed,” exclaimed the Hon. Bob, “I should rather think so! And I’ll give those chaps at the Home Office no rest until it is signed, sealed and delivered. Tell you what it is, Dick, we’ll just send old Morley a couple of cheering telegrams, have a dig at the Home Office, and wind up by a little dinner to celebrate the occasion.”

And all of these things were done, even as the Hon. Bob had suggested.

But Home Secretaries do not move in such matters with any remarkable celerity. All that even Lord Frappingham, goaded thereto by his son and heir, could extract from the Minister was an assurance that the case was one apparently justifying the exercise of the Royal prerogative, and that steps would duly be taken in this direction.

“Confound their Red Tape delays!” grumbled Dyver.

“Amen!” responded Heavysides. “But I say, you know Morley’s laid up in hospital, and I daresay they’re looking after him all right. By the time he’s fit to get about he’ll be a free man.”

“That’s true, old fellow,” assented Dyver.

“What worries me most of all is, that this Pardon won't wipe away the stain of the conviction; that's the affair I want to see cleared up. Now, I believe old Aaronson was somehow in the swim with Darrell, and, if so, he might be persuaded or frightened into owning up, in view of Griffin's approaching release. I shall hunt him up!”

His efforts to find the Jew were unsuccessful; but, the very next day, Isaac delivered his master's message.

“Tell him I shall be there to-morrow at three,” replied Dyver, “and that I shall be alone.”

That same evening, the papers contained exhaustive descriptions of the Clapham Murder, of old Judith's statements, and of Hugh Darrell's patent guilt and flight. Dyver, much as he disliked the man, was fairly overwhelmed with horror and amazement.

“An unprincipled scoundrel,” he muttered, “I've long believed him to be; but—a murderer! and, as it would seem, the murderer of his own mother—ugh! The thing is too ghastly to think about.”

The terrible drama was rounded off the following morning by the publication of the discovery made at Weymouth railway station. But for the slip of paper attached to the poniard, the identity of the murdered man with the missing Hugh Darrell might never have been

suspected, despite the proofs of disguise. But Marco Paoli's memorandum gave a clue which the police had no difficulty in following. Beyond all doubt the assassinated occupant of the third-class compartment and the Clapham murderer were one and the same man. Well might seriously minded editors remark that rarely in the annals of evil-doing had so fiendish a crime been punished by such swift retribution.

Dyver found Aaronson in a state of terrible mental agitation. The news of Darrell's fate appeared to have completely crushed him. The fact was that his extreme dread of Morley Griffin's vengeance had begotten a conviction in his mind that the initials M. G. at the end of the assassin's message meant *Morley Griffin*, and none other. The references to some girl and her father were, he believed, merely a blind to throw the police off the scent. True, Griffin himself had not struck the blow, since he was still at Dartmoor; but he had clearly contrived to hire some ruffian to slay Hugh Darrell—an Italian *bravo* possibly, since the words were written in that tongue. Nay, perhaps, the very man who had been so anxious to find out Darrell's whereabouts.

Yes, that would explain all. He, Aaronson, had been followed to Camden Town, whence Darrell, despite his disguise, had been shadowed to his doom. His own turn might be expected to

come next, unless indeed Morley Griffin should be induced to spare him through Mr. Dyver's mediation. It will therefore be seen that the Hon. Bob could not possibly have found his man in a more amenable frame of mind; and the Jew's evident distress induced him to take a very high hand.

"So, Mr. Aaronson," he began, sternly, "I see that your confederate, Hugh Darrell, has cheated the hangman."

"For God's sake, don't call him my confederate, sir!" whined Aaronson. "He planned the whole affair himself."

"We have only your word for that assertion," retorted Dyver; "but, anyhow, you helped him in his rascally plot to ruin Griffin, I'm quite sure of that. And the best thing you can do is to own up—lest worse befall you."

"What can I do? What *can* I do?" moaned the Jew, beating his breast Hebrew-fashion in his despair. "If I tell all I know, I shall be prosecuted and ruined. If I remain silent, I shall be . . . murdered, as he was!"

A new light broke in upon Dyver. Aaronson evidently believed that Darrell had been assassinated at Griffin's instigation, and that he himself stood in imminent danger of a similar fate. He smiled contemptuously at the idea of his friend avenging his wrongs in such cowardly fashion; but he resolved to take the utmost advantage of the Jew's fears.

“And what better fate would you deserve,” he demanded angrily, “if you allow an innocent man, who has suffered so much already through you and your accomplice, to remain under the stigma of a disgraceful crime? Boiling in oil would be too good for you!”

“Don’t be so hard on me, Mr. Dyver,” pleaded Aaronson. “What would you have me to do?”

“Exonerate Morley Griffin from the foul charge he was convicted upon,” was the prompt reply. “Furnish me with proofs that he was the victim of a vile plot.”

“If I do my best to clear him,” rejoined Aaronson, “will you undertake that he will not seek to . . . to . . . harm me?”

“Yes,” said Dyver, after a studied pause, “I will promise you that.”

Aaronson gave a deep sigh of relief. Mr. Dyver, as Griffin’s representative, had consented to come to terms, and this was almost more than he had dared to hope for.

“I have a letter from Mr. Darrell,” he went on to say, “notifying me that Mr. Griffin would call upon me for the purpose of discounting an acceptance, post-dated three days, for £861 10s.—”

“What is the date of that letter?” interrupted Dyver.

“Friday, August —th,” said Aaronson, hesitatingly.

"Go on," rejoined Dyver, referring to a memorandum book.

"He also requested me," continued the Jew, "to discount this acceptance, notwithstanding the post-dating. I did so, the following day."

"You consummate old villain!" exclaimed Dyver, fiercely. "And you suppressed this letter at the trial, well knowing that it would have neutralized Darrell's contention that he was abroad upon the date borne by the bill!"

"I was never asked about it," stammered Aaronson, feebly.

"Asked, you old scoundrel!" cried Dyver. "Had you not been Darrell's accomplice, you would have produced it in Court. Give me that letter."

Aaronson hesitated. He hoped to make better terms for himself. Dyver guaranteed his life, but what guarantee had he that he would not be prosecuted? Dyver divined this.

"See here," he said, gripping the old man by the wrist, "I have made a memorandum of your statement, to which I will swear upon oath. And, what is more, I shall at once give you into custody and have every paper in this office placed under seal, unless you forthwith produce that letter."

This threat produced the desired effect. With trembling hands Aaronson opened a drawer in his safe and, after some fumbling, found the letter, which he handed to Dyver.

"Trick number one," remarked the latter, placing it in his pocket-book. "What else have you got?"

"I have . . . the acceptance itself," said the Jew.

"What use would that be?" asked Dyer.

"Well," explained Aaronson, "you see, Darrell swore positively the acceptance was a clumsy forgery of his handwriting, and the experts couldn't agree. Now I, who knew his writing well, was so well satisfied of its genuineness that I discounted the bill. Mr. Griffin's lawyer missed that point altogether—never even asked my opinion. If I swear that I am still convinced it was genuine, and produce other specimens of his handwriting similar to it, would not that help your case?"

"Yes," assented Dyer, "it would. But there is one thing more. Did not Darrell repay you the money you advanced Griffin? Come! No prevarication! . . . Yes or no?"

"Y . . . es," reluctantly admitted the old man, "he did."

"Then sit down and write me a clear statement of all these facts," commanded Dyer, "and we'll have it sworn to before a Commissioner for Affidavits. Give me also the acceptance and the specimens of similarly disguised handwriting; and I think you may congratulate yourself upon escaping so lightly. Griffin will not prosecute."

“But what about the Treasury?” urged Aaronson. “It might be deemed a case for the Public Prosecutor.”

“So it ought to be,” was the rejoinder; “but I think I have sufficient influence to prevent that if you do your part thoroughly and establish Griffin’s innocence. At all events you must run the risk. Refuse, and you shall leave this room in custody.”

With many groans, Aaronson did as he was bidden. In his secret soul he was well pleased, well knowing that, if Griffin declined to prosecute, he was tolerably safe. But outwardly he seemed crushed by the severity of the conditions imposed. It took considerable time and wasted much paper, before Dyver expressed himself as satisfied with the wording of the document; and then it had to be read over, sworn to, and signed by Aaronson in the presence of a Commissioner. But at length all was settled, and Dyver hastened to transmit his proofs of Morley’s innocence to the Home Secretary.

That same night, Aaronson, after a lengthy consultation with an astute lawyer of his tribe, decided upon crossing over to Ostend (in case the Public Prosecutor should, for once in a way, bestir himself) until the affair should have blown over. He was just in time to catch the steamer *Trenton*, and was *not* amongst the eight passengers saved after that ill-fated

vessel had been run into and sunk by the German s. s. *Rosenkranz*. He left neither will nor heirs. And it may be assumed that neither the Chancellor of the Exchequer, nor his numerous debtors, much bewailed his loss.

The documents secured by Dyver would, of themselves, probably have sufficed to convince any reasonable Home Secretary of Morley Griffin's innocence. But additional and stronger proof was forthcoming. The police naturally took charge of the contents of Laburnum Cottage, pending the discovery of Martha Nesbitt's heir-at-law; and, amongst the dead woman's correspondence, were found several letters from Hugh Darrell, referring explicitly to his schemes to ruin Griffin and to their triumphant issue.

In the face of such overwhelming evidence, even the Home Office felt itself called upon to postpone perusal of the newspaper and bestir itself. The strain upon the Department was unprecedented, and several permanent officials were late for lunch at their clubs; but the outcome was that Morley Griffin, in addition to a Free Pardon for saving Myra Gradwell's life, received a second Free Pardon for—a crime, it was now proved, he had never committed! Justice may occasionally make a mistake; but it never apologizes.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## JUSTICE AT LAST.

ALTHOUGH still officially known as convict Z 754 and a prisoner in the gaol-infirmiry, Morley Griffin had very pleasant dreams the night of his recapture. Had not the governor, Major S——, himself, so far unbended from his habitual stiffness as to compliment him upon his prowess and to predict his forthcoming liberation? Had not the chaplain congratulated him? And had not the doctor applied bandages and lotion to his injured ankle with his own hands? Therefore Morley slept peacefully and dreamt of Myra. Whereas (if the truth be told) poor Myra could not sleep at all, at the cottage,—thinking of him.

The following day he received two telegrams (true, they had been opened officially, but what did that matter?), and the Chief Warder smiled meaningly as he handed them to him. They ran as follows:

*“First heard of escape at Monaco, and hastened back to visit West. I have just read about your encounter with Wolf yesterday.*

*Wish I had been there to see it. Must have been a rare set-to. Bravo, old chap! My immediate mission in life is to haunt Home Secretary. Your release merely question of Red Tape. Within ten days, I hope, so keep your pecker up.—R. DYVER.*

*“Ditto to all Bob says. Came with him from Monaco upon off-chance of being useful. Glorious news. Club in ferment of delight. Ovation in preparation for you.—HEAVY-SIDE.”*

“Well meant,” remarked the Chief Warder, quietly, “but not very discreetly worded. I begin to think I did well to shift you to another cell some time back.”

“Do you?” asked Griffin innocently. “I have often wondered why you did so; but I suppose you had your reasons.”

“Yes,” assented the other, laughing, “I had. And I daresay you could make a near guess at what those reasons were. But, you see, you were given away.”

“Well, all I can say is,” rejoined Griffin, drily, “that the man who would give another away deserves to be—say, crippled for life.”

“Like Jason!” suggested the Chief Warder, quaintly.

“Very like Jason,” replied Griffin; “very like indeed.”

You see, one may bandy jokes with a prisoner

who is a bit of a lion, and whose release is a foregone conclusion!

Major S—— had probably received instructions from the Home Office to allow his recaptured prisoner every possible indulgence; for that same afternoon, when Walter Gradwell and his daughter asked permission to visit him, they were conducted to his bedside without demur.

Gradwell was delighted with the telegrams. "It would be a real pleasure," he protested, "to shake those two gentlemen by the hand. Why, Mr. Griffin, you're as good as a free man already. Our poor little petition, from the residents hereabouts, won't be needed at all, though I can tell you the names are pouring in like wild-fire! I'd like to make a copy of these two wires, if you don't mind. just to look at now and then and laugh over."

And receiving a smiling assent, Mr. Gradwell moved off to a distant window to execute his project. Did he divine that the young people had confidences to interchange? Or that Myra would thank her deliverer with less embarrassment were he not by? At all events, he left them together.

"Myra," said Morley, gently; "I have something to ask you."

The girl's beautiful brown eyes met his for a second, and then the long lashes veiled them. But long as they were, they could not cover the blush that rose to her cheek.

Morley gazed at the pretty, half-shy, half-expectant face, and apparently drew hopeful augury from the scrutiny.

“Myra,” he said again, “I have something very important to ask you. You know my story. You know that I was convicted of a disgraceful crime, of which, as God is my judge, I am innocent. They are, it seems, going to give me my freedom; not because I am innocent, but because I protected you yesterday against The Wolf. I have yet to prove my innocence in the eyes of men; and I believe that, once free, I shall do so—*when I find Darrell.*”

Myra noticed how the rich, soft voice hardened, and how the bright blue eyes gleamed, as these last words were spoken; but she remained silent.

“I thought, a week ago,” continued Morley, “that I had but one purpose in regaining my freedom. Now I know that I have another. They are about to give me back my life, Myra; but I need your love to make that life worth living. Will you be my wife?”

“*My life,*” answered Myra, her soft brown eyes meeting his frankly, lovingly, “I owe you already. My love was yours—I think, from the first time I heard your story. But neither my life nor my love can avail to make you happy, unless you, once and for ever, forego all intention of revenge upon your betrayer. Do this!

Prove yourself as noble-minded as you are brave and strong, and—make me the happiest girl in England!”

“What you ask is hard to do, darling,” said her lover, “harder than you perhaps think: for, I have suffered cruel wrong, and the impulse to retaliate is strong within me. Yet, for your sweet sake, I would do it were it a thousand times harder. I promise that I will not seek to avenge myself upon Hugh Darrell. But you must not ask me to forgive him. That I can not do!”

A flush of pleasure lit up the bright young face, and the ripe, red lips, of their own accord, sought his.

“Forgiveness will come in time, my Hero!” she whispered gently. “And do you know, Morley, I am selfish enough to remember that, had this great injustice not befallen you, I would never have seen you. Under Heaven, I owe all my happiness to Hugh Darrell!”

You see, they are very simple-minded, some of these Devon lasses, and believe in Providence just as their forbears did.

“And he owes you his life, Myra,” her lover answered, gravely. “It has long been the one fixed purpose of my life to hunt him down. However, you have my promise, and there the whole miserable business ends.”

At that precise moment, Mr. Gradwell thought fit to announce that he had completed

his task; nor could Morley devise any decent pretext for asking him to make a second copy.

"Your friend Mr. Dyver," remarked Mr. Gradwell, "is a credit to human nature, let alone to the aristocracy."

"Dear old Bob!" exclaimed Morley, enthusiastically. "Won't he be surprised when he learns that I have won a wife, as well as my freedom, by taking his advice and going into training!"

"Eh?" queried Gradwell. "What's that about a wife?"

"Simply that I love Myra very dearly," replied Morley, "and that she loves me in return."

"Oh!" said Gradwell, drily. "That's it, is it? Well, I saw what was coming, and, had I seen any reason to object to you as a husband for my girl, I'd have spoken up ere this. Take her, my lad. And may you both be as happy as I hope to see you!"

And so, without further fuss, it was decided that the marriage should take place as soon after Morley's release, and as quietly, as possible.

"That will be three weeks from the day you leave this place, then," remarked Gradwell. "Of course you will have to run up to London to see into your affairs, and I think the simplest way would be to have the banns put up there."

"Oh, I'm quite content with the agreement

that we are to be married as soon as possible !” rejoined Morley. “ That’s understood, isn’t it, Myra ? ”

“ Yes,” assented the young girl, blushing prettily, “ I . . . suppose so.”

“ The doctor tells me I shall be able to hop about, with the help of a stick, in a couple of days,” said the invalid, “ and the Governor has promised to let me have the run of his own private garden. They give me everything I ask for. So, you see, I have nothing to complain about as regards my treatment. But,” he added, with a look at Myra which deepened the blush on that young lady’s cheek, “ I do hope Bob Dyver will succeed in hurrying up the Home Secretary.”

“ And I’ll go and rake in the signatures to our local petition ! ” cried Gradwell, energetically. “ Come along, Myra child. We’ll be having the doctor down upon us for exciting his patient. Good-bye, my dear lad. We’ll come and see you every second day.”

And, shaking Morley cordially by the hand, the big-hearted law-breaker discreetly turned his back to give the lovers opportunity for a parting embrace.

The Hon. Bob did not fail to keep his incarcerated friend well informed of the startling events which occurred during the ensuing three days, by an avalanche of telegrams, letters, and newspapers. In succession came the news of

the Clapham Murder, of Darrell's assassination, of Aaronson's confession, and of the discoveries made by the police amongst Martha Nesbitt's correspondence. And then—two days later—came the crowning piece of intelligence.

Our hero, Myra, and Gradwell were seated in the Governor's garden, discussing the terrible and wondrous things that had so suddenly come to pass, when Major S—— was seen advancing towards them, an open telegram in his hand. Now the Major was a great stickler for punctilio, and his first words were somewhat mysterious :

“Mr. Morley Griffin, I believe?” he remarked, enquiringly.

“Yes, sir,” answered Morley, amazed at the question and standing at “attention;” “I am Morley Griffin.”

“Then permit me to introduce myself,” rejoined the Major. “I am Major S——, Governor of H. M. Penal Establishment at Dartmoor. Will you kindly present your friends?”

“Major S——,—Mr. Walter Gradwell. Miss Gradwell,—Major S——,” stammered Morley, suppressing a strong inclination to laugh.

“I have received a telegram from the Secretary of State for the Home Department,” continued the Major, “concerning you, and which I have great pleasure in showing to you.”

He handed Morley the telegram as he spoke.

What wonder if the young giant's hand shook, and if his voice trembled as he read the dispatch aloud?

*“Major S——, Governor, Dartmoor.— Ample proofs having been adduced of miscarriage of justice in case of Morley Griffin, now in your charge, I have recommended Her Majesty to grant unconditional free pardon in his favor. Release him at his own convenience.—CROSS, Home Secretary.”*

A dead silence ensued for perhaps five seconds; and then, despite the presence of the Governor, Nature asserted her sway. Gradwell hurled his hat in the air with a ringing cheer, whilst Myra threw herself, sobbing with joy, into her lover's outstretched arms.

“Upon my word,” remarked Major S——, blowing his nose with apparently unnecessary vigor, “I am extremely glad, Mr. Griffin, to make your acquaintance and . . . er . . . that of your friends, under such gratifying circumstances. I trust you will all do me the honor to partake of luncheon.”

And so it came to pass that ex-convict Z 754, still wearing the suit which Gradwell had given him, was that day an honored guest at the table of his late goaler-in-chief. The Major still kept up the fiction of having just met Morley for the first time, and introduced him, with

all due formality, to the chaplain, doctor, and other principal officials. Perhaps nothing could have brought home the fact more clearly to his mind that he was, in very sooth, his old self again, and that the sufferings of the past two years were but as memories of some hideous nightmare.

Bob Dyver telegraphed that he and Heavyside would arrive that afternoon to carry him off in triumph to London; and when Gradwell departed with Myra for the cottage, they did not expect to see Morley again for some weeks. Strange to say, he appeared to be in no way downcast at the prospect of this lengthy separation from his sweetheart; and poor Myra subsequently shed some tears in private over his seeming indifference.

"He doesn't think so much about me now," she told herself, sadly. "Perhaps, when he returns to his former friends and his old life, he will forget me entirely."

Peace, silly little fluttering heart! You little dream of the surprise which your love-inspired, artful captor has in store for you.

Dyver and Heavyside duly arrived, were cordially welcomed by their former host, Major S——, and, after much leave-taking of his late custodians, Morley accompanied them back to London, where the ovation foretold by the dragoon was in store for the returned exile. The twice-disappointed Walters awaited them

at the terminus with a dogcart drawn by the fast-trotting mare.

“Glad to see you back, sir, safe and sound,” he said, touching his hat respectfully. “It only seems like yesterday that I and the mare were waiting for you here,—and she fit to go for her life!”

“The third time is the charm, you know, Walters,” laughed Morley, as the mare whirled them off to his old rooms, already prepared for his reception.

That night still lingers in the memories of what may be termed the “Dyver Set” as a distinctly *wet* one,—an expression, I am given to understand, having no reference whatever to the weather, but rather to the quantity of fluid refreshments consumed. Yet surely if ever occasion justified a little extra conviviality, the present was such an occasion. For there was Morley Griffin, everybody’s favorite, back—if not from the grave, at least from a living tomb—amongst his old friends, a martyr and a hero! What wonder if the corks popped like volleys of musketry, and glasses were raised, with imprudent frequency, in his honor?

“Never felt inclined for soda-water down at Dartmoor,” muttered Morley, when he awoke next morning. “What a pace Bob and Heavy-side set last night to be sure! Ah, well! No great harm, once in a way. And now for a stiff day’s work.”

His first visit was to his lawyers, who congratulated him warmly on his regained freedom and complete exoneration from the charge upon which he had been convicted.

"Were you a poor man," remarked Mr. Drabb, the senior partner, "I have no doubt the Treasury would make you some monetary compensation for your unmerited punishment; but, placed as you are, no such claim could decently be put forward. You must rest content with the hearty sympathy of all right-minded persons. Now, as to business. That forfeiture-clause threatened to give us some trouble; but, of course, as events have turned out, it ceases to operate. You merely require to sign a release to your trustees, to enter into possession of your fortune, which, with accumulated interest, now exceeds £17,000. We have instructed your bankers to place £500 to your current account."

"Thank you," answered Morley. "Some of it will come in very handy just now."

Mr. Drabb smiled.

"Money seldom comes amiss," he observed, quietly. "By the way, Mr. Griffin, have you any idea why this Hugh Darrell persecuted you so remorselessly?"

"No," was the reply; "unless it was jealousy over Miss Conyers. I never injured the man, to my knowledge, in my life."

"Jealousy may have intensified his hatred

of you," rejoined the lawyer, "but the main cause of his dastardly conduct was a different one, and has only quite recently come to light. From letters and other documents found in the safe of the woman he murdered at Clapham (and who was in reality his mother), it is clear that Hugh Darrell was the illegitimate son of the late Colonel Hewitt Griffin."

"What!" exclaimed Morley. "My uncle's son?"

"Just so," assented Mr. Drabb, "and therefore, in a sense, your cousin. Now the Colonel, whom I knew well, was a very eccentric man, a great believer in astrology, fortune-telling, and such nonsense. Whilst you were still a lad at Harrow, some charlatan told him, or he discovered for himself, that his heir would disgrace himself and come to a bad end within ten years; and so convinced was he of the truth of this revelation, that he framed his Will in accordance with it. That was why, you being then thirteen years old, he fixed your testamentary majority at twenty-three, and added the forfeiture-clause, in favor of Martha Nesbitt and her son Hugh, should your conduct justify this strange prediction. When we add that this Hugh turns out to be identical with the man whom you knew as Hugh Darrell, his object in getting you convicted of felony is apparent."

"I understand it all now," said Morley. "He

looked upon me as standing between him and what he doubtless regarded as his birthright."

Mr. Drabb nodded acquiescence. "The strangest part of the affair is," he continued, reflectively, "that, illegitimacy apart, this Hugh Darrell *was* his natural heir, *did* disgrace himself, and *did* come to a bad end. Rather a remarkable coincidence, I consider it. However, that's all past and done with. If you will call, say, in three days' time, Mr. Griffin, I shall have all in readiness to place you in full possession of your inheritance."

To this Morley readily agreed, and then drove, naturally enough, to his bankers, where he drew £250. His thoughts next took an ecclesiastical bent, apparently, for he ordered the cabman to proceed to Lambeth Palace. There he had an interview with a grave-looking secretary, who finally filled in an imposing, highly-ornate, printed form, and received in exchange the sum of £100.

Looking vastly pleased over this rather expensive investment, Morley was then driven to a telegraph-office, and dispatched the following:—

*"Walter Gradwell, Hope Cottage, Dene Hollow, viâ Princetown, Dartmoor.—Get someone to look after cottage and Judith. Come up to town to-day with Myra. Drive from station to Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, where*

*rooms engaged. Urgent and important, so don't fail.—Morley Griffin, Mohawk Club, St. James'.*"

Upon the way to Brown's Hotel, our hero paid a visit to Hancock's, the well-known jewellers, as though bent upon getting rid of the balance of his money. Yet, as his purchase was a very simple one, and he received change out of a £5 note, lavish expenditure was clearly not his present object after all. He secured the necessary rooms at Brown's and then wound up at the Mohawk Club to lunch with Dyver and Heavyside.

To them he narrated what he had done, having previously given them a full account of his adventures at Dene Hollow.

"But I say, Morley old chap," protested the Hon. Bob, "isn't this going the thing rather suddenly, you know?"

"Morley's quite right," put in the dragoon. "I'll see him through, if you funk it, Bob."

"I'll yield my place to no man," retorted Dyver. "Look after the traps and the commissariat, Dick. They're more in your line."

"All right," assented Heavyside. "Jermyn Street at 12.15, eh?"

"That will do admirably," said Morley. "But I wonder what Gradwell will say?"

## CHAPTER XIX.

### WHAT HAPPENED IN JERMYN STREET.

WALTER GRADWELL received Morley's telegram soon after mid-day, and was sorely puzzled to divine what unlooked-for event could have happened to render his presence with Myra in London so "urgent and important."

"Surely there can't be any hitch at the Home Office about the Free Pardon!" he exclaimed. "Can it be that Myra's personal evidence is needed? Yet, they couldn't well re-arrest him after letting him go. I give it up. But since we're wanted, we'll go. I can get Dave Herrick and his sister to look after the old girl. Myra child, pack up your best things, and put my blue frock-coat in with them. One needs to look a bit smart in the West End of London."

Myra obeyed, wondering greatly at the suddenness of the summons, and wondering, it may be, still more whether her best Sunday gown, and the new bonnet with the pink trimmings, would pass muster in the metropolis.

They reached Paddington at half-past seven, where Morley, notified by telegram of their departure, was waiting to escort them to Dover

Street. Myra had never yet seen her lover dressed to advantage, and as she caught a first glimpse of him, towering above all other men and looking so elegant and handsome, she could scarcely refrain from crying out in her joy and pride.

Even Gradwell was startled by the altered appearance of his prospective son-in-law. "We're but homely folk to rub shoulders with fashionable people," he remarked, as the hotel brougham bore them swiftly along.

"Meaning your clothes?" asked Morley, laughing. "Make your mind quite easy on that score. You will find your rooms more or less inundated with things, from amongst which you will be able to make shift for a day or so until the tailors put you to rights. As for Myra, Madame Hortense will see to her."

"Well," said Gradwell, "we are in your hands, and I suppose you know best. But, tell me, why did you send for us so suddenly?"

Morley trod on the speaker's foot, warningly. "I will tell you presently," he answered, "after dinner; for I have invited myself to dine with you to-night."

"Dine?" repeated Myra in astonishment. "Why, we dined before we left the cottage!"

"They call that luncheon here," explained her lover, gazing tenderly into the wondering brown eyes.

"Call it dinner, or supper, or what you will,"

put in Gradwell, heartily, "I'll do justice to it. Traveling is rare hungry work."

Possibly the hall porter was not much impressed by the luggage of the new guests, consisting, as it did, of a box, carpet bag, and band-box containing the bonnet with the pink trimmings. But then, the quantity of goods previously sent up to the suite engaged for number 17 made amends.

Doubtless this sturdy-looking gent, and his pretty daughter had escaped from a shipwreck, and had come to London to refit. Their sponsor, at all events, was quite the correct thing, and therefore he received them benignly.

Now Brown's Hotel is, in vulgar parlance, distinctly a "swell" caravanserai, whereas, in the same *argot*, the Métropole and the Savoy are merely "swagger" hotels. Under the circumstances Morley had exercised a wise discretion in selecting the former. This, of course, is by the way and without prejudice.

Dinner passed off admirably, as it needs must—given healthy appetites and a good *chef*. Then, whilst Myra retired to discuss possibilities, at short notice, with Madame Hortense's emissary, Morley and Gradwell came to an understanding over their cigars and coffee. Gradwell listened to Morley's explanation at first doubtfully, then relentingly, and finally good-humoredly.

"Have it your own way, my lad!" he ex-

claimed, when the whole lot of the dire plot had been unfolded. "I won't say you haven't stolen a march, because you *have*. But, I don't blame you, not I. And . . . if you *should* chance to call round to-morrow to take Myra and myself for a walk, why I suppose we can't do less than accompany you. But, I say . . . own up now. This is your friend Dyver's idea, isn't it? Just the sort of joke I can fancy him planning out. I'm really anxious to meet this Mr. Dyver. A straight-going, over-proof sample, I call him!"

"Are you?" rejoined Morley. "That's very lucky, because, strange to say, he and Heavy-side are just as anxious to meet you! It's quite early yet. Come round with me to the Club."

"But how about Myra?" asked Gradwell, weighing his parental responsibilities against his own inclinations.

"My dear Gradwell," explained Morley, "Myra will be as happy as . . . as, say, a man who has just received a Free Pardon . . . amongst the *chiffons* that all girls love. Go into her rooms yourself and tell her you're going out for an hour or so, that I'm waiting to say good-night, and that . . . she's not to sit up for you. I'll bet you a new hat you'll find her and the girl from Hortense's up to their eyes in millinery."

"For a young man who has been lately

quarrying granite," remarked Gradwell, whom an unexceptionable dinner and vintage wines had rendered a trifle facetious, "you seem to know a great deal about young women's tasks. Let me see."

He presently returned with Myra. "You were right," he whispered. "They were up to their eyes in it! Say good-night and let's be off."

Saying good-night was, apparently, more than mere repetition of the simple words, for Mr. Gradwell was allowed a liberal ten minutes to cool his heels in the hall ere Morley rejoined him. Then they proceeded arm in-arm to the Club.

The Hon. Bob Dyver and Captain Heavyside were discovered in the billiard-room playing 200 up.

"Hullo, old chap!" cried Dyver. "Found your way round, eh? I say, I wish you'd take my cue. Can't play a bit to-night, and Dick is 186 to my 141."

"How the deuce do you expect me to play billiards, seeing that I haven't touched a cue for over two years?" asked Morley. "But let me introduce to you my friend, my more than friend, Mr. Gradwell. Mr. Gradwell . . . the Hon. Robert Dyver, and another old pal of mine, Captain Heavyside. Gentlemen, spare me further formula; know one another."

Inasmuch as they already knew each other so well by name, Morley's appeal needed no

seconding. Captain Heavyside ran out in his second break, and they all adjourned to the smoking-room. There the program for the following day was definitely arranged, and Morley, successfully resisting Dyver's intermediate suggestions of "just one last soda," landed his father-in-law elect safely at Brown's before midnight, and was himself dreaming—ah! who shall say what rapturous dreams?—before Big Ben had tolled the half-hour.

What more natural than that the Hon. Bob Dyver should call the next day at about 11 A. M. to visit his newly-made acquaintance, and that he should have found Morley Griffin deep in conversation with an extremely pretty brown-eyed, brown-haired young lady?

Gradwell did the honors. "Mr. Dyver," he said in his best manner, "this is my daughter Myra. Myra,—the Hon. Robert Dyver, Morley's oldest and dearest friend."

Myra smiled sweetly upon the sandy-haired little gentleman, who had striven so manfully in her lover's behalf, and shook his hand with charming earnestness.

"You must be my friend also," she said frankly, "and let me be yours."

"Agreed to, with all my heart, Miss Gradwell," replied the Hon. Bob. "I always thought Morley about the unluckiest fellow I ever knew. But, by Jove, the tide has changed now with a vengeance!"

Myra blushed laughingly at the implied compliment, and glanced half-shyly at her stalwart lover.

"It has indeed, Bob," assented Morley. "But I think Dame Fortune will have exhausted her good things when she gives me Myra."

Then a walk was suggested, the day being cold and bright and clear—one of those crisp, bracing days that sometimes precede November fogs. Madame Hortense's hurried efforts had not been spared, and when Myra made her appearance in a superb sealskin jacket with cap to match, she looked simply bewitching. Dyver and Gradwell went ahead; she and Morley followed. Somehow their way led them through Jermyn Street, and, just upon the stroke of twelve, they passed a church.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Dyver, stopping short, "here's a church with the door open. Happy thought. Let us go inside."

And Myra, who supposed that churches formed items in the program of sight-seeing, fell innocently into the snare. Not until a clergyman, clad in his robes of office and accompanied by a sedate-looking person in black, advanced towards them from the vestry, did a suspicion of the truth dawn upon her. Then she glanced at her lover's radiant face and knew all. She was about to become Morley's wife, not in three weeks' time as her

father had said, but that very day ! The little heart beat fast ; she felt frightened (she knew not why) at the suddenness of the surprise. Her color came and went, and she looked half-piteously at Morley.

“ Be brave, my darling,” he whispered. “ I couldn't bear to wait three long weeks, and so I procured a special license. You have nothing to do but to say ‘ I will,’ when the clergyman asks you if you will take me for your husband.” And, so saying, he handed her over to her father, whose mission it, of course, was to give her away. What could she do but obey her husband's instructions.

It was the quietest possible of weddings. Dyver acted as best man, whilst Captain Heavyside just came in in time for the ceremony. In one short quarter of an hour Myra Gradwell became Morley's wife. But when the officiating clergyman had pronounced the benediction the stillness of the old church was broken. For, bribed and instigated thereto by Dyver, the organist had bided his time and now burst forth with the glorious Wedding March, to the soul-stirring strains of which the newly-made bride walked back to the vestry upon her husband's arm. There Morley forestalled a clever flank movement on the part of the Hon. Bob to secure the first kiss. Captain Heavyside was duly introduced, claimed successfully a similar privilege as an old friend of the bridegroom,

signed as a witness, and hurried away to ensure that the carriages were in readiness.

Mr. Gradwell, looking very imposing indeed in a fur-lined overcoat, embraced his daughter tenderly.

“It was scarcely fair, my dear, to take you by surprise like this, was it?” he whispered. “But there, I married your mother in much the same way, and I don’t think we, either of us, ever had cause to regret it.”

Two barouches were in waiting at the church door. The bride and bridegroom had one to themselves, whilst the three gentlemen took possession of the other. Captain Heavyside’s arrangements included a wedding-breakfast at the Star and Garter, Richmond, where they formed as merry a party as ever that famous hostelry harbored within its walls.

The honeymoon was as quiet as the wedding. Bognor was the place chosen; and there the young couple abandoned themselves to three weeks of delightful, selfish, unalloyed happiness.

Mr. Gradwell, after spending a pleasant week in the society of Dyver and Heavyside, returned to the cottage at Dene Hollow, where extensive alterations were forthwith taken in hand.

But little more remains to be told.

Morley Griffin no longer the implusive, somewhat flighty Morley Griffin of old, but a steady-going married man, deeply impressed with the

responsibilities of his position, invested the greater part of his fortune in a sound, prosperous business, and soon found himself in the receipt of a handsome and increasing income. He and his young wife reside in town ; but they invariably spend two months each year with Mr. Gradwell at the cottage, which, however, has outgrown all claims to that unpretentious title. Needless to say, Mr. Gradwell at once abandoned his illicit distilling upon his daughter's marriage, and the "Smuggler's Caves" are now quite the show-places of the neighborhood.

Mrs. Darrell has never returned to England. Her husband's death placed her in possession of the £10,000 insurance money, and this, in addition to her own £10,000, obviously sufficed to maintain her in comfort. Rumor had it, at one time, that she was preparing to enter a religious community in Rome ; but those best acquainted with her shallow, unstable character averred that she had merely taken up this sensational phase of religion as a distraction. She is, at all events, little likely to cross her former lover's path.

Her mother, Lady Conyers, is still to the fore during the London season, and still affects Italy during the remainder of the year. Amongst the wedding-presents which poured in after the announcement of Morley's marriage appeared in the newspapers, was a massive bracelet set with

brilliants and sapphires, with which was enclosed the following lines :—

*“ To Morley Griffin. A token of good-will and of unavailing regrets for misjudging him. —H. C.*

Now, Lady Conyers' name is Helen.

The Hon. Bob Dyver still treads in the flowery paths reserved for heirs to peerages, and still postpones, as he puts it, “ weighing in for the Matrimonial Stakes.” Upon the other hand, it is credibly asserted that Heavyside is only awaiting a majority in his regiment, to imitate Morley's example.

Such then is the story of “ Dartmoor ” as I, its chronicler, have many times heard it from the lips of the principal characters concerned in it. Bob Dyver, Heavyside, and I are, indeed, frequent guests at Dene Hollow during the hot August days ; and, upon one of these visits, I read out my version for criticism. On the whole, it has been approved of. Then I begged Mrs. Morley Griffin to dictate the Moral of the Story.

“ Oh, I'll do that for you ! ” exclaimed the Hon. Bob, removing his cigar from his lips, as we lounged under the shady verandah. “ Keep your muscles in good trim——”

“And learn how to box!” supplemented the dragoon.

“Silence, scoffers!” I replied severely. “I asked Mrs. Griffin, not you.”

And then brown-haired, brown-eyed Myra, seated at her husband’s feet and caressing her first-born, who was joyously riding to Banbury Cross upon his knee, granted my request. These were the words that she spoke, and I know that every heart in our little group echoed them:—

“Thus may Evil oftimes turn to Good, and our bitterest trials be but the prelude to an enduring happiness!”

THE END.

# Dartmoor

BY MAURICE H. HERVEY

AUTHOR OF "DEAD MAN'S COURT," ETC.



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